Fruit of Hades

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Fruit of Hades

by Chidingtimes

Summary

The plan to trap Hannibal is in motion, but Will begins to feel conflicted as the desire to maim and mangle grows within him, swayed by Hannibal's compelling voice. Meanwhile, this emotion that Will strikes in Hannibal, can he exploit it to reveal him to the world. Does he even want to when he feels it as well?

But Hannibal knows that Will is indulging his darkness just enough to lure him out, only it is more than enough for Hannibal to convince Will of the wonder that is the art of murder. After all - Hannibal never plays a game he can't win.

Basically season 2 canon compliant with the 'what if' differences of if Hannigram happened and they included sex and romance into their little game of poke the psychopath.

Notes

Written after Su zakana, continuing along the canonical path of Will playing killer to entice Hannibal to expose himself. My version of Will struggles not to lose himself to the darkness unfurling, especially the part that desires Hannibal. I wrote this when anticipating Shiizakana so while I'll adjust to the episodes as they come out (so more season 2 spoilers), it will likely divert at the same time.

As canonically compliant as possible with the insertion of Hannigram relationship into the unseen blanks of the episodes. But it will eventually take an altered spin to appease my aching heart after that Finale!

Also if you have any questions, remarks or even just wanna say hi please feel free to drop me a question on my tumblr - Elliearna I'd love to hear from you guys <3

Daiisshō

Between you and me, it's hard to ever really know

Who to trust, How to think, What to believe

Between me and you, it's hard to ever really know

Who to choose, How to feel, What to do

Never fade. Never die.

You give me flowers of blood

~Bloodflowers - The Cure

*

Standing on the edge of the ravine, he looked down as agents and forensics scuttled about the body looking for anything that might lead them to the killer. The search had figures weaving fluidly between the rocks, like the streams of water they were cautious to avoid as it wove its own path, spilling past them. *Beautiful.* Will's head twitched involuntarily to the side as he felt the approach of this killer, tickling the edges of his mind, begging to be seen.

A clap to the shoulder shook him from his trance. *Jack.* "Will, I need you to--."

Following the detective down the incline, Will tuned out what Jack was saying; confident it would be much like everything else the detective had *needed* from him. He *needed* him to slip into this killer's skin, to see how taking a life made their body thrum with purpose. He needed him to feel how it made them more alive than ever before, and then to return to his own mind unscathed, unaffected. But their carefully constructed plan to lure Hannibal in wouldn't work if the bait was losing his mind. The bait becoming the true Chesapeake Ripper's accomplice would certainly play to Freddie Lounds' sadistic sense of irony. As determined as he was to catch Hannibal, she could be right about Will after all.

Since his release from Baltimore State Hospital, his control was wavering, darkness gnawing at his gut as he moved through each killer's design. Jack's need was driving him closer to the proverbial edge, any more, and he was sure Hannibal could nurture the violence within him into true fruition with little resistance. Hannibal needed nothing from him, but he *wanted* everything. He wanted Will to lose control. And he was close to it. The darkness, the potential Hannibal saw within him worked to draw him out into the open, but not without a reciprocal effect on Will. Every night he returned to the stable, gun aimed at the beady eyed man pleading with him and felt the same powerful impulse he'd felt stripping Garrett Jacob Hobbs of his life. Without Hannibal, he indulged in the rush of power denying Peter's social worker his right to live.

Jack couldn't see it, for though Will was bait for Hannibal, if Will didn't catch him first there would be nothing left within him to resist the murdering temptation offered by the enigmatic man.

Fearful of the actualisation of his dreams, Will had refused to see Hannibal, trying to comprehend the part of him that was slowly unfurling into a killer. Could he keep it contained long enough to lure Hannibal into the open? His mind battled the growing impulses within him, resisting the control taking life gave him, the power Hannibal sanctioned. *At least you wouldn't be alone.* A traitorous voice whispered lowly to him, heavily accented and soothing. True, he wouldn't be alone, he would have Hannibal—.

Will sucked in a breath. He couldn't afford to think like that, lest he speed his descent into the monster's grip and lose all possibility of catching him.

Stepping carefully over the river stones, he arrived at the large stone slab where the victim had been presented. Mutilation, degradation and theatricality. He didn't even need to fall into the mind of the killer to know that this was Hannibal. It was almost picturesque the way the body curled around the smooth stone it was perched against. Long willowy limbs encircled the stone in a serene embrace, the young woman's curls splayed under her head where her cheek rested on the cold surface. The body was positioned so delicately, naked and drained of blood, her alabaster form morphing into the stone around her. The singular boulder she sat cocooned around on the slab was hollow at the centre, as was the majority of the women's torso according to forensics.

FBI agents worked fastidiously around Will Graham as he crouched down to get a closer look at this particular design. Though hollowed out, flowers bloomed from inside the women, filling the space in the rock with flowers they had all seen before; the poisonous Belladonna, white oleander, blue hydrangeas and ragwort. There were variations on the Chesapeake Ripper's MO, enough that it would likely be seen as a copy cat reverent of the Ripper to all but he and Jack, for they both could see - this body was practically gift wrapped for Will. There was an almost protective way the body was encircled around the stone, as though it were a child, a child that needed protection. What was Hannibal playing at, was it supposed to be her child? The illusion of serenity created by arrangement and scenery was heavily juxtaposed by the sheer mutilation of her features. The woman's mouth was split open in a scream of horror, her eyes, not removed but precisely cut one way vertical and then another horizontal. The use of the glasglow smile was personal, a form of penance as the Ripper finally claimed the copy cat kills, meanwhile providing the FBI with further evidence of Will's innocence.

As Will quietly told Jack this, the man frowned deeply and clapped Will on the shoulder. Speaking aloud he carefully left out any acknowledgement that this was a victim of the Ripper, for according to all records the Chesapeake Ripper case was closed with the death of Doctor Chilton. Even with his silence, Jack had a knowing look and a hint a exasperation, for with this body there could no longer be any doubt in his mind - with Chilton dead, Hannibal Lecter was certainly the Chesapeake Ripper. He saw it too, that this body was Hannibal's gift to Will. What Will didn't tell Jack was that for the first time he could look into the reason behind the Ripper's design and see a message for Will as clear as day.

The Ripper was angry, no, hurt. Hannibal was hurt.

Ever since the stables, Will had refused to see the Doctor. In the times he had since seen Hannibal, he played the chided budding killer angry at Hannibal for stripping him of the chance to kill again. This provided Will the chance to try and fortify himself against Hannibal's unmatched ability to reach into him and nurture his potential for violence to life. Hopefully in those moments Hannibal had mistaken the shake in his hands as anger and not his crumbling control over his darker instincts. Unacknowledged emotions ran underneath the façade he was constructing for the world. Like the cold pinch he felt when he remembered Hannibal taking the gun from his hands, the desire he'd felt to strip them both of life in that instance. Worse still was the strongest emotion within him that threatened to undo all of his and Jack's careful planning. There was a part of him that craved the return of his friend, a part of him more than willing to overlook Hannibal's murderous identity.

How desperate for connection could he be?

He meant what he said to Peter about envying his hate, because for all that Hannibal had done, he still didn't hate him, how could he when he was the only person Will had ever truly felt connected to? It was a dangerous combination, his emotional connection to Hannibal and the darkness slowly unfurling within him. Together they took the praise and pride Hannibal had offered him when he caressed his face and swelled with the desire to please him. Despite whatever Hannibal had anticipated in Will, he had exceeded well beyond his expectation. Will was playing too beautifully in Hannibal's palm and he feared just how natural and comfort the mask he wore felt.

"Will, are you done?" Jack questioned with folded arms and Will blinked his drifting conscious back to focus on the body. For the first time, the Ripper had carved and brutalised with purpose opening his design, his heart to Will. All the emotions he pulled from the scene played especially for him; the loneliness, the wounded pride and the eagerness to see poison flourish from within. Hannibal missed him. But surely he knew that sending him a *victim* wouldn't solve anything? Pursing his lips, Will moved to examine the woman's head, unable to avoid the similarities between the soft head of brown curls and his own. Reaching out Will's gloved hand brushed a stray curl, revealing a singular Hyacinth flower entwined in her hair, the final garnish to Hannibal's meal. Frowning, Will got to his feet, irritated by his ability to see the strings and yet understand so little of what Hannibal was trying to prove. *Fucker.*

As Will concluded his analysis and the body was ready to be shifted to the morgue, Price plucked the flower from the hair, presenting it to Jack. "Hyacinth Orientalis, medically it is an effective antiseptic and a natural sedative, fantastic for tea, even said to relieve depression too." He placed it into the bag, passing it to the detective.

"Symbolises renewal, the restoration of self-esteem and an aid to rebuild trust after betrayal." Zellar added.

At this Jack looked to Will, and he knew he's been found out; Jack had the final piece to realise who this poem was meant to serenade. Before Will could ascend the ravine, Jack caught him by the arm looking serious and grim. "We need to talk Will. But first, there is

something else you should see. Price places her death three hours prior to our hollowed victim."

Will sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose, dislodging his glasses. "Give me a minute."

Jack frowned and Will could practically see the command of urgency playing on his tongue. Thinking better of it, he gave Will a sharp nod before heading to the other side of the ravine. Will followed behind slowly, choosing his way through the rocks carefully as he surveyed his surroundings. It was a cold November day, colder still what with them being south of Corporal's Rest. Trees barren in the winter chill, the river was icy cold with icicles clinging to the edges of rocks as the stream weaved a path through the spaces between. Will tuned out the assortment of noises made by the agents around and focused on the sound of running water. It was serene, peaceful even as the water steadily flowed into a cache ahead and Will imagined it brimming with fish. Certainly a good fishing spot.

Suddenly Will froze as a memory of the previous year floated to the surface of his mind.

"I'm curious, have you found the time for fishing between the horrors Jack continues to subject you too?" A glass of Beaujolais wine was raised high in Hannibal's hand, perched to the tip of his lip; his eyes steady as they watched Will recline on the lounge in his study.

"Are you asking as my therapist or my friend?" Will asked dopily, feeling as though he was melting in the soft lounge beneath him, his stomach full and content when the first actual meal he'd had in days. Absorbed by the comforts of the nearby fire and rich colouring of the room, he felt oddly out of place in his plaid shirt and jeans. Hannibal's whole house communicated his sophistication, and yet there was a peace Will found here, lounging about in the Doctor's study with a glass of red wine to compliment Hannibal's superbly cooked meal of Lamb sept-heures.

A wave of nausea ran through Will as he was once again reminded of the many meals he and Hannibal shared, feasting on his victims.

Hannibal placed the glass carefully upon the table, eyes trained on the way Will stretched out across the expensive fabric. "My concern for you Will is not severed once we leave one room and enter another," he tilted his head. "But, to answer your question, I ask you as a friend. Fishing was once your favourite pastime. Have you found the time for it recently?"

Will allowed a small nostalgic smile to rest on his face, transforming the usual weary demeanour into something gentler, softer. "No. No, not real— not at all actually." He murmured forlornly, looking up to see Hannibal fixated on something.

Lazily bringing his fingers to his face, Will searched for the piece of dirt or food that did not exist as Hannibal blinked the hunger from his eyes. "That is a shame, maintaining one's hobbies is a sure way to calm the mind from the unpleasantries that unsettle it."

Will snorted. "My life unsettles me Doctor Lecter, I don't believe there is any form of fixing that."

“Please, call me Hannibal, I believe we are far beyond the need for such formalities, especially in my home.” Hannibal smiled as Will scratched his head sheepishly. “Tell me Will, have you ever been to Baltimore State Falls, to the river south of Corporal’s Rest?”

Will shook his head, eyelids dropping in sleep and glanced to his glass of wine, he had really drunk that much? Hannibal rose to his feet, his stance oddly predatory as Will struggled to keep him in focus.

“Then I shall have to take us there some time” Hannibal’s voice rumbled over him as he lost his battle with sleep, impeccably tailored legs taking silent, sure steps towards him.

Recalling the memory left Will’s limbs stiff and weighted. The possibility that this place was chosen especially for Will and *worse*, chosen because it had some meaning for he and Hannibal rooted him where he stood. His stomach flipped as the sheer realisation caught up with him. Hannibal had never killed for any other reason other than the fact that he could, save victims murdered for his own protection. But for Will, Hannibal had killed, especially for him. A love note. Pressing the heel of his palm into his thigh, Will forced himself to move despite the eerie feeling that had settled over him. It was as though maroon eyes followed him with ever unbalanced step he took towards the gathering ahead.

Since Chilton’s interference, Will had begun to recall his previously hazy memories in a new light, seeing the deception and predatory behaviour in Hannibal’s actions and words. He had since realised that Hannibal had a proclivity for lacing his drinks with sedatives, and the occasional narcotic. He wondered whether the sedatives was meant to allow him to finally sleep, a small act of kindness as Hannibal tried to sooth some of the damage left by the induced seizures and hidden encephalitis. More likely it had simply been another method to make Will consider Hannibal his stability, someone who understood him and delivered him the chance to finally sleep. True to how well Hannibal had insinuated this belief, Will had still slept the best in the Baltimore Hospital for the Criminally Insane after a visit from Hannibal Lecter. A part of Will had still considered Hannibal a foundation for his security, his focus that balanced the tilting weight of his sanity.

He didn’t trust him; of course he couldn’t, not after Abigail, not whilst knowing Hannibal was capable of doing something heinous to a girl they had both considered their daughter. But he had still felt that Hannibal could somehow bring peace to his mind and restore clarity, because he was his friend. He felt it, even though he wielded his denial of it like a blade to hurt Hannibal, he felt it too — Will had always considered Hannibal his friend. That is, until he recovered his memories and finally realised that Hannibal was the Chesapeake Ripper. However it wasn’t truly until Beverly—.

Will stumbled softly over the rocky ravine, foot slipping into the icy water as he crossed. Catching himself on another rock his head snapped up at a light chuckle. He searched amongst the other agents, only to find her by his side, staring at him. Maybe she was a hallucination he hadn’t gotten over, but Beverly Katz had never really spoken to him, not like the others. Instead she appeared occasionally with concern and a disgruntled whisper in the background and sometimes, he swore she even looked a little sadly at Will. Perhaps she too feared the way he was morphing into delectable bait, trying to catch a fish twice shy.

She stood there clothed in what she'd been discovered in, looking how she would have had Hannibal given her to them whole before cocking her head and fading away. She was unlike any of his other delusions as after just seconds of seeing her, she would always disappear. Many times Hannibal had spoken of God, but Will had never explained to him that he didn't believe there was a god. With that opinion came his scepticism over the supernatural, including the existence of ghosts. But when he first saw her in his dank Baltimore Hospital cell, his desperate mind wanted to believe she was a ghost, because then it meant he could blame God for the consuming sickness that was Hannibal Lecter. Now he sustained himself with the belief that she was, instead of a hallucination, a driving part of his mind reminding him that he was to capture the killer. No matter how alluring and no matter how much he felt himself slipping under Hannibal's soothing control.

But Hannibal's behaviour hadn't gone unnoticed; he clearly had a weakness when it came to Will. He wanted him, wanted to mould him into a companion fit for himself, he sought connection. This shared desire tied them together, its crippling loneliness leaving Will to cling to the monster for fear of the gaping hole Hannibal's absence would create. However why Hannibal sought companionship was above Will, but it didn't feel like loneliness per say, perhaps something deeper within the person suit that Hannibal wore. Perhaps it was a human trait Will could exploit? He had been unable to discern anything, especially as he recovered from the experience at the stable. However that didn't matter now for clearly Hannibal was over Will's little mood and would continue to leave him little gifts until he returned.

Hannibal Lecter had to be the most aggressive passive aggressive individual Will had come across.

Reaching the crowd on the bank, Will was pulled to its centre by Jack's hand as it parted the group and grasped hold of his shoulder. Eyes widening, Will halted so suddenly, his parker pulling down his shoulder from where Jack had a hold of it. The body was lying perfectly within an oval drawn in the dirt, looking much like Snow White frozen in a deathly sleep. Small and pale, she was petite in features with a trickle of blood dried upon her split lip. Too many layers of the pastel yellow fabric enswathed her young naked body, the bright gay colour matching the wispy locks of pale gold hair. From head to toe, the child was dirty and bruised, her body stained with grime, blood and potentially other sordid fluids. The bruises were darkest around her neck where her assailant had surely strangled her and though her legs sat perfectly together matched with little yellow shoes, the distribution of dirt around her indicated they had been parted roughly.

Will stumbled back, his face a blank canvas. "I- Jack I can't- I have to go." The sickening arrangement of this child had his inside churning as his mind filled with a cold rage and a surprising amount of disbelief. There were so many things to the design that pointed anywhere but Hannibal Lecter, and yet, a flourishing bouquet of Belladonna, white oleander, ragwort rested on her chest. Was this Will's punishment for ignoring him? A dead child, dead hope, and life. Ruined potential? Will felt himself fracture; his resolve to distance himself from Hannibal disappearing in his anger. Hannibal Lecter wasn't his friend, he was never his friend; he was the cold and methodical serial killer that had to be put down, regardless of the stakes. Regardless of whether Will would get out alive.

He grasped Zellar by the foreman, “Let me know if the body is missing any organs.” He hissed before ascending the ravine to his car. Firing the car up he breathed heavily against the wheel before leaving the crime to finally make his 7:30 appointment.

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Dainishō

Chapter Notes

> Here's Hannibal, hope his voice has a realistic feel and Will is beginning to realise that not only are things more complicated with the trap than expected, but also that there may be more to both their feelings :P
> Enjoy! Elliearna

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Arriving earlier than expected, Will stormed into Hannibal's waiting room to see him speaking to Alana in hushed tones. A heavy weight settled in his stomach as he watched Alana's fingers brush gently over Hannibal's knuckles. Observing the exchange, Will was alarmed to see a hint of boredom in those maroon depths as they watched the affectionate motion in silence. Boredom for someone such as Hannibal was dangerous indeed for the toy he had grown weary of. And yet, Will knew Hannibal respected Alana, but that didn't mean she wasn't in danger. As a small smile curled Lecter's lips, Will felt something ugly claw at his insides in a seething jealousy that boiled beneath the surface. For who, he honestly couldn't say. Both Alana and Hannibal were amongst the few people who understood Will, especially Hannibal, and there was a deep desire to selfishly keep them to himself. There was however the more pressing concern of Alana's relationship with Hannibal.

Huffing heavily, Will stalked forward and Hannibal's hand dropped easily, his eyes glinting as he spotted Will. Clearly this was an unexpected surprise, and a thrum of pleasure spiked over Will's spine at the look of interest, curiosity and dare he say, *longing* in Hannibal.

"Will." Hannibal purred, his rich voice rumbling with a tone of genuine happiness. It was enough to pique Alana's interest, her eyes flying up to stare at Hannibal's face, searching for- Will honestly had no idea. But when she turned a frown to Will, he saw hints of suspicion and discomfort in her eyes. Did she see it to; did she see the obsession Hannibal had with Will? Did she sense its sickness, its consuming nature?

Maybe that was what prevented him from completely turning from Hannibal, the consuming obsession of their relationship. Hannibal surely revelled in playing god with Will, brutalising him so intensely, battering his mind and psyche whilst treasuring him so deeply. That kind of obsession gnawed at the chains surrounding the darkness inside of him. Somehow Hannibal, with all his meddling, had focused this part of him to desire Hannibal's company. A sort of kinship bound by shared monstrosity.

“Hello Mr Graham.” This was how his relationship with Alana was now, full of formalities.

“Alana, I’m afraid I must give Will my full attention now. We have some catching up to do I believe?” Hannibal adjusted the base of his jacket, smile controlled but his eyes stared intently at Will. He was fucking baiting him, playing around like cat and mouse.

He held his tongue long enough to storm passed both Hannibal and Alana, unconsciously leaning into Hannibal to graze him slightly. His body thrummed at the contact as he moved deeper into Hannibal office, hearing him make an ever polite, albeit hasty goodbye to Alana. The pain in his stomach subsided with jealous pleasure at her dismissal. Will grit his teeth, how could Hannibal possibly have that much control over him? Whenever he was in Hannibal’s magnetic presence, Will felt himself subconsciously drift towards him, an intense pull towards the man that offered him release from moral bounds. Would it be worth indulging just enough to catch him? He could just as easily lose himself to Hannibal in the process. Or worse, could he catch him and lose him forever, lose that chance to connect so purely with someone. Even the beautiful monster behind him.

“So, you’ve finally decided to stop avoiding me.” Will felt the disturbance in the air as Hannibal passed him, leaving a lingering scent of a rich, heady aftershave. Leaning after the scent, Will chided himself for how shamefully attuned to the man’s presence he was, always searching for him. Perhaps the presence of Hannibal Lecter would forever weigh on his mind. Perhaps long after his capture, if Will could manage to be a successful lure.

“I got your message.” Though Will moved closer to his designated chair, he refused to sit.

“Oh?” Hannibal’s gaze lingered on the chair before sitting down himself, watching Will almost clinically. “What message?”

Will sneered. “A gift of blood, poisonous flowers and macabre beauty. Two bodies practically gifted wrapped for me.”

Hannibal’s eyes flashed with pleasure at his description before schooling his expression to one of admonishment, but not quickly enough to be missed by Will. “You still believe me to be the killer shadowing your steps. I really do not know what I can do to further settle your suspicions about me.”

“Don’t play with me; I have no more delusions about you Doctor Lecter.” Will began to pace, feeling the fury of the gift wrapped child coming to the forefront of his mind.

“I’m not the only one who enjoys these games Will. But, you are my friend and all I want is your trust.” He paused, cocking his head to watch Will paced back and forth. “However I can’t help but wonder what you wish to do with me, given your violent state.” A picture of concern, Hannibal played his part well, the lie seen only in his serenely poised form. He didn’t fear Will; there were no more illusions as to who held the power between them.

And he claimed to be his friend? After today, after he dare try to gift Will a child's corpse and talk about trust. Will had reached his limit. "A child? A child Hannibal? You think I could let that one slip through. After Beverly… and now you present me with a fucking gift wrapped child?!"

Hannibal's eye ticked at Will's profanity but he was otherwise calm throughout Will's explosion. "Ah, poor Miss Katz--."

"Don't you even—!" Will took a threatening step towards Hannibal, whose eyes lit with fire at the challenge in Will's stance. He controlled his expression and had the decency to look appropriately alarmed at Will's approach.

"What did you eat?"

"Pardon?" Hannibal frowned softly.

"What part of her did you eat?" He reiterated voice slow and level.

Hannibal stood as Will got closer. "I fear you are obsessing over your new case Will, you need to separate yourself." Hannibal reached out and draped his fingers around Will's forearm, the contact generating a calming vibe.

He wrenched his arm back, refusing to back down from this power play. "WHAT DID YOU TAKE FROM HER? What did you eat!!?" With another step forward Will forced his way into Hannibal's space.

For a brief moment their faces were inches apart, breath mingling before Will's world shifted. He stared in silence as he found himself pressed to Hannibal's chair, the man himself bent over him, hand secured around his forearm and radiating control. "Will, you need to calm down. I am not the villain to your narrative, I am your friend."

Caged under Hannibal's powerful form, every point of contact left Will's body tingling, from the press of their knees to the searing grip of Hannibal's hand. His expensive jacket had fallen open revealing a shirt of crisp blood red and tendrils of his hair had dropped about his face making him seem startlingly youthful. However, still a figure of power and composure, Hannibal's maroon eyes searched his with concern.

"Why a child Hannibal?" his voice was quiet, body relaxing at Hannibal's close proximity.

Hannibal pursed his lips; clearly he was not going to play the honesty game with Will. "You must stop yourself from connecting me to your cases Will."

Will surveyed him, looking at the nuances of Hannibal's face, struck by how this man of such horrors managed to present such an appearance of kindness and prestige. "Why would this 'new' Ripper kill a child?" Will finally acquiesced, body thrumming at the pleased look that crossed Hannibal's face.

Exactly how much control did Hannibal have over Will to cause such involuntary reactions?

Relaxing the pressure on his arm, Hannibal helped Will return to his feet, holding him close for a lingering moment. With a tilt of his head, Hannibal breathed in deeply and Will shivered when he was released. “It would seems that you see the Ripper everywhere Will.” He held a hand out for Will to reclaim his seat across the room.

Crossing the room, Will tried to shake the desire to press himself into that expensive suit and cocoon himself in the warm security Hannibal’s presence offered. “He is everywhere, he is smoke and shadows." He growled, recalling Gideon's words. "But I have no desire to look at my relationship with the Ripper Doctor Lecter.” Will glared as he sat down into the cushioned chair.

Reclining in his chair, Hannibal smiled slightly, fringe falling about his face. “As unfortunate as it is, it would seem that you must talk about it. Chilton had you under his grasp for quite a while, that much is public knowledge and now his copy cat has reached out to you, offering you bodies that are, how did you say, ‘gift wrapped’ for you?”

There was a moment of silence where they stared at each other, levelling and assessing. “You never answered my question.” Will watched steadily, sick of the pretense. “Why would the *Ripper* kill a child?”

Hannibal grazed his knuckles against the hollow of his throat and in a flash Will imagined rope twisting around his neck as Will’s ‘acolyte’ hung the good doctor up like he was Judas on the cross. Will frowned, why had Hannibal even forgiven Will for that? It was one thing for Will to want to kill Hannibal for Abigail and Beverly, but why hadn’t he killed or a very least despised Will for his attempt on his life? Even now, the normalcy to which Hannibal returned to even after Will had made such aggressive accusations. Despite stopping him from killing Peter’s social worker, Hannibal clearly didn’t want to dissuade Will from violence and killing. Instead, it would seem Hannibal would take great lengths to encourage him to realise his knack for killing.

Is that what Hannibal was trying to do, reveal his potential and help him actualise it? Did he want to watch someone else kill, or was it something more. Did he perhaps want someone to kill with, someone who could *empathise* with his killing. This trap for Hannibal was slowly but surely turning upon Will as the darkness within him grew. Was Will’s subconscious leading him to Hannibal’s capture or was it leading to his inevitably consumption, literal or not?

“I do not think this child’s death was at the hands of this new found Ripper, rather, I would image there to be further connection between the Ripper’s victim and your child.” Hannibal’s voice broke him out of his revenue. He had all but admitted to murdering the hyacinth woman and yet Lecter looked surprisingly peaceful and unconcerned by its implications. Will frowned down at his fingers as a sense of relief began to fill him. Hannibal hadn’t killed the child?

“But the flowers…?” Considering his earlier onslaught, Will was surprised by how much he wanted to believe that Hannibal hadn’t done this.

“Tribute? To the Ripper who has fallen before him, or perhaps a replication of the Chesapeake Ripper's taste for theatricality and beauty. Perhaps he is using it to draw your attention to the victims’ connection in order for you to see exactly what he has…bequeathed you?” Hannibal made a low sound as he shifted slightly before fixing Will with a peculiar look. “Perhaps he killed a killer?”

Will stared at him in shock, staggered by such a blatant confession from the usually cryptic man. Finding a pattern with Hannibal’s victims had always been impossible, but here he had killed a murderer. Or had he killed her for Will? Regardless it was a strange and almost righteous act of villainy for the Chesapeake Ripper.

Hannibal’s mouth turned into a hungry smile. “You can’t afford any illusions about the Ripper Will, he is no vigilante, but he does harbour you in a precious place. Perhaps, this child killer upset the Ripper’s sensibilities, enough to wind up on his pickings?” Hannibal slipped up, referring to the Ripper too directly and yet his eyes glinted not in surprise but in intrigued delight.

Perking up, Will reached forward to grasp hold of the bits of Hannibal slipping through the cracks of the mask he wore. “Unworthiness is vital to his selection. A list of the unworthy formed from the harsh judgement of his sensibilities.” Hannibal didn’t kill indiscriminately, and yet, if he murdered those he considered unworthy, just what did he considered unworthiness? And yet, regardless of the pervasive superiority of the man, Will could understand it.

Hannibal licked his lips and Will followed the motion carefully. “Do you still think about killing me Will?”

Will stared his therapist down. “Yes.”

Hannibal took a deliberate breath before shifting forward to perch on the edge of his seat. “Did the thought that I could do such a thing to a child encourage that desire to kill me?”

“Yesss.” He hissed, rising to his feet again as adrenaline coursed through him.

“We’ve spoken before of the power you felt when you inflicted pain and death upon the evil. I wonder if the Ripper feels the same way.” Hannibal mused, eyes glinting sinisterly.

Will froze at the intimate connection, Hannibal’s words striking a nerve. “I am not a monster like you. You betrayed me.” Hannibal looked surprised. “I needed you and you left me to rot, crippled by a disease and seizures of your making. You wanted me to think I had killed them, to make me think I was you.”

Hannibal looked saddened by Will’s biting remarks. “I told you once before William that I wish to settle your suspicious about me. Of course afterwards, you sent a murderer after me.”

“After you killed Katz.” Will growled.

Hannibal's eyes softened to a sorrowful almost vulnerable expression, the same one he got when spoke of Abigail. And the one he had when he spoke of friendship through the institutional bars. "I don't wish to hurt you, my friend. I want to know you, to help you understand the darkness in your life."

It seemed they had stopped playing games. "How? By exposing my desires to kill? By sending me poems of blood and horrors? And then what?" Will asked incredulously, gripping his hair.

Quicker then he'd seen Hannibal move before, the man was suddenly in front of him, arms bracketing Will's elbows. Will felt a radiating burn from where Hannibal's fingertips rested on the skin near his bunched up sleeves. "Will, I asked you once before, but I'll ask you again; Why you? What does the Chesapeake Ripper want with you?"

He wished it could have been an admission, a confession that he was the Chesapeake Ripper, but it was too subtle of a remark with no grounds to stand on, but at lest perhaps now the pretense that this was another other than Hannibal was gone. Omission and falsehood was struck from their conversation and Will was overcome by a heady sensation at the man's proximity, mind quietened by the expensive musk wafting from his broad body. He was conditioned to find even Hannibal's scent calming and stabilizing - he never really stood a chance.

They searched each other's eyes, Will's skin rising at the gravitating pull of Hannibal's closeness. His throat caught as Hannibal leaned forward, breath grazing his cheek. "There is so much I would do for you my friend, to prove your worth to me."

Surprised by the admission, Will realised for the first time just how deep the bond with Hannibal went. Will may be lost to Hannibal, but it appeared he had returned the favour, their relationship as equally consuming on both sides. Hannibal felt something for Will, something profound and ineffable even to the calculated Ripper himself.

Will nodded in acquisition, drawn to silence by the way Hannibal's eyes lingered on his lips, a single flash of confusion crossing the good Doctor's face.

There was something there.

Hannibal clearly wanted him, desired him in a way Will didn't fully understand. But there was something else to their relationship, a guarded longing Hannibal was hiding deep within his shell. All he had to do was offer himself completely and perhaps he could exploit it. They were in deep and it was clear this wouldn't end without the enthralment of the other. For the sake of the FBI, Will hoped it was Hannibal because there was no telling what he would do for Hannibal once he was lost to him completely. He couldn't reveal this development to Jack, if the man knew how high the stakes were, he wouldn't allow Will to play such a dangerous game. And yet, even now he felt a thrill at the possibility of being claimed by Hannibal. They were alike, just as alone as each other, waiting to fill the void. But who would yield to obsession first?

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Will realised he meant something to Hannibal the moment he was able to hold a gun to the man's head without any form of resistance. Hannibal was a predator, a survivalist of remarkable skill, and yet, he trusted him enough not to do it, because he knew Will wanted to know why. Why him? Even despite sending the murderer after him, Hannibal still wanted something of Will, many things it seemed and potentially enough to expose himself. He wanted Will and his actualised darkness. He didn't want to be alone anymore. Since returning to therapy after his release from Baltimore State Hospital, the pace of their relationship had changed drastically. Each session with Hannibal held a lesson for him and a glimpse under the mask that the Doctor wore, as though he was paving a path for Will to him. With each step towards Hannibal, Will took a step closer to becoming the monstrosity within him. Meanwhile, Hannibal was still doing everything to restore their friendship.

Will looked at a picture on his desk, finger lingering on the Hyacinth buried amongst the brown curls. Forensics had discovered that the recent 'copy-cat' Ripper victim was Elaina Curtis, a severely disturbed rape victim who had sought sick clarity by inflicting rape upon 7-8 year old girls before killing them. Her design was twisted and a little bit pitiful for through their death she had attempted to release herself from her own experiences. For whatever reason, the fact that Hannibal had presented her to Will had left a deep and disturbing impact on him.

Wrapping up the ends of his part in the case, Will left the office for home, his mind disordered by the conflicting emotions within him.

Oddly enough he found himself at Hannibal's front door, hand stretched out to use the knocker when the door swung open. Hannibal's palm was braced against the frame, his other hand wrapped around Alana, fingers grazing the slope of her hip. Back against the door, Alana threaded her fingers through Hannibal's hair, drawing him into a kiss.

Simultaneously sensual and heated, Will realised something as Hannibal's eyes left Alana to find him frozen on the porch. Hannibal did enjoy her. Yes, he held her close to him as insurance against any of Will's more impulsive actions, but he lavished in her wiliness to be consumed by him. The only way Will would be able to get her out of harm's way was to surpass that desire and entice Hannibal away from her. He'd have to give him whatever he wanted.

Pinned by that mesmerizing gaze, it was only when Hannibal released a teasing throaty groan that Will took a step back, a flush of heat running down through his chest. Rising up within him was a wave of jealousy, not over Alana, but over Hannibal. This frightful feeling however was nothing compared to the deep seated hunger he saw reflected in Hannibal's eyes. There it was again, some unexpected need that Hannibal wanted from him even then, as he mashed his lips to Alana's, his eyes never leaving Will.

Would Will give it to him? Could he do it to save Alana?

Blinking heavily, Will turned on his heel, the noise alerting Alana to his presence. As she gasped, he walked away from the porch towards his car, pausing at the door to glance once more time at them. Alana had turned away, but Hannibal gripped the banister watching him with a curious heat. Could he do it and manage to control the beast Hannibal wished to unleash within him?

"Will."

He shut his eyes as Hannibal's hushed call settled over him, before slipping into his car and leaving the couple behind. Gritting his teeth, Will forced the jealousy down and gripped the steering wheel hard. By far the biggest concern it would seem was whether he could do it without falling for the man.

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Daisanshō

Chapter Notes

First time writing from Hannibal's point of view, hope you enjoy my lovelies! Elliearna

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Though the affair with Alana was growing unnecessary, the distress it caused Will persuaded Hannibal to continue with her. Alana was a blessedly beautiful, intellectual creature, but she was no Will nor would she ever be able to understand him like Will. For that, she was beginning to render herself an unfit companion. It had been a while since he'd been with anyone and her absence from his bed would be sorely missed, but their time was drawing to a close. For now, she was still a valuable bargaining chip and leverage against Will until he finally let her go for Hannibal.

As Will began his descent into darkness, Alana was a constant concern of his. Whether it was for fear of exposing his darkness to her or her continued exposure to Hannibal, Will was fixated on her, much to Hannibal's annoyance. The former concern could prove interesting as his desire to protect her altered, the need to protect himself eclipsing her safety. After all, even now there was a part of him capable of killing her. Hannibal was exalted by the mere thought of watching Will kill Alana, how he would caress her so beautifully as he tore her apart. Today as Will furiously paced the floor; it would seem he was reacting with jealousy towards Hannibal for maintaining his relationship with Alana and stealing her away in the first place.

What he didn't consider however, was that this was a jealousy over Hannibal himself.

He sat across from Will in his office, his control beginning to fray at the edges as Will fought him on everything he said, rancorously goading him into snapping. Likely Will was trying to get a glimpse at the killer beneath, trying still to find something he could exploit. But each remark held a cold, embittered truth; Will was angry with Hannibal. He could only assume this was over Alana. For since he'd arrived on his porch, powered in snow and eyes wide in betrayal, they had said nothing of the incident or Alana herself, but he could tell it lingered on the tip of Will's tongue.

But it was no excuse for such discourtesy.

The itch to punish Will for his rudeness was like a vibrant thrum throughout his body, but he wouldn't give Will the rise he was looking for, no Hannibal had a much better, simpler idea. He had humoured this childish attempt for long enough. "Will, we have fallen far from topic. Why don't you sit and calm down."

Stopping short, Will fixed him with a glare and he gazed innocently back, enjoying the sneer that curled at Will's lips for his reproach. Hannibal would certainly have to teach Will how to moderate his empathy, lest he lose control of an emotion at an opportune moment. Before the petulant turn this session had taken, he had been trying to focus Will towards embracing his newest case with an empathetic touch. Instinct, this killer ran on power and instinct, like the power that was building within Will. But Will had yet to harness it that drive, he had to be intimate with his urges less he forget control and blow the brains out of a victim like he almost did with the social worker. Will may think it was a part he was playing for Hannibal's benefit but that raw instinct within him was very real. And Hannibal could teach him to adapt, evolve and become as Will had so elegantly put it. With that he would have a true friend, a family and a companion who saw and did not shy away from the depths of him.

Someone he could share his design with.

But it seemed it was a lesson for another day as Will grew more agitated, his dialogue slowly but surely falling apart as he got further through his whiskey. Hannibal wasn't concerned though, hiding a smile. Even now Will looked beautiful, his mind twisting as he continued to search for objections to Hannibal, to his ability to be both his friend and a killer. However, whilst it was fascinating to watch, it had gone on for far too long. It was well past the conclusion of their session, yet Will had rudely consumed this time together that Hannibal anticipated so greatly. It simply wouldn't do, yet it was only a matter of time before the solution kicked in.

Will drained the last of his glass. "You whisper like the devil in my ear, tricking me into craving a darkness I have never wanted, never needed. When you get my-me, doing what plans with me?"

Hannibal rose to his feet as a dazed look crossed Will's face and he looked down at his drink. "I can't take sense." He frowned as Hannibal grasped his arm to lower him into his chair. "Drugs? Again Hannibal?" He asked incredulously.

Hannibal smiled a little cruelly. "Your desire to *try* and hate me exceeded my expectations." He purred and felt Will flinched as he stressed the feebleness of the attempt.

Standing up, he flipped open his patient book, writing down the administration of a mild sedative. "I found that quite rude. But you have clearly been depriving yourself of sleep again, this is necessary sedation of professional concern. After all, you are prone to seizure when stressed, mmm?"

Will glared vehemently at him, his eyes dropping as unconsciousness overcame him. Hannibal smiled fondly, reaching out to touch the warm flesh of his cheek before clenching his hand in surprise. Once he had been a tactile person, a life time ago. But around Will he constantly felt the need to reach out and touch him, not for the affirmation that he was there,

but something more. To bond perhaps? Pushing such a vulnerable emotion back, Hannibal withdrew from Will's side, moving to make preparation for when he awoke.

An hour later Hannibal had written up today's concluding notes, poured another fine glass of whiskey and now relaxed across from Will, his sketchpad on his lap. He didn't notice Will had joined him, his mind and fingers focused on crafting the image of a sleeping Will with clean strokes of graphite on the page. At Will's moan of discomfort, Hannibal's eyes shot up to see him blinking away the drowsiness. He licked his lips. Something about Will in this state enticed the predator in Hannibal who wanted not to maim and destroy, but claim that pliable form, strip him bare and—.

"How do you feel?" Hannibal spoke aloud, interrupting what was turning out to be a rather unusual detour into his emotions.

"Fuck you." Will spat, straightening up in his chair.

Hannibal narrowed his brows, lip twitching at the use of profanity. It was not enough to warrant harming Will, but perhaps enough to punish him for it later to train the insolence out of him. Will knew quite well where Hannibal stood on the use of vulgar and uncouth language. "Now William, I think it would be more beneficial if you just told me what it was you wanted out of me, instead of wasting our time?"

Will bared his teeth, and Hannibal loved him in that savage moment. As much as that concerned him, he couldn't deny that he felt something akin to love for Will Graham. He wasn't quite sure of its exact nature, but it was certainly the closest he'd felt to a person since Mischa, more so than even Lady Murasaki.

Will squeezed his eyes shut and when they opened, they were clear and focused. "What do you intend to do with Alana?"

Hannibal quirked an eyebrow. "I of course intend to continue my relationship with her __"

"To what end?" He growled and Hannibal arched a brow. As he had suspected, Will feared Alana may meet an end similar to that of Miss Katz. A fair concern as Hannibal had, on numerous occasions imagined the delight killing Alana Bloom would give him, only for the pleasure of his artistic heart.

"I understand, our relationship has caused you some stress but—."

"That's not what this is about." Will interjected, an array of emotions struggling for dominance over his face.

Feigning sympathy, Hannibal nodded. "Jealousy is a difficult emotion to manage; it reaches out souring words and everything within you, a poison that strikes the core. She was very important to you Will, I know this must hurt you, but I can't just give her up." He licked his lips, watching Will closely. Of course he was willing to cast her aside, but he would make Will ask him for it first.

“I’m not jealous.” Will sneered, fingers flexing around the chair’s arms.

Hannibal was disappointed, after all hadn’t they promised to tell no more lies? Hannibal couldn’t help but chide him. “William.”

Will surprised him with an act of unchecked violence, smashing the cup beside him into the table. Hannibal was immediately to his feet, even as Will drawled out, voice low and even. “I am not jealous.”

Oddly unperturbed by the breaking of his good crystal glass, Hannibal watched transfixed as blood ran down Will’s palm, realisation dawning across Will’s ragged face. Blood usually ignited Hannibal’s instinct to kill, but with Will he thought only to heal him. This of course made sense, the need to protect what he was trying to cultivate. It did however feel deeper than that, born within the peculiar entanglement of his current emotional state.

“Will, are you alright?” He was quick to reach Will’s side, hand reaching out to touch his face. Will started as Hannibal grazed his cheek with his fingers. A wave of desire ran through him as Will wore an expression of perplexed vulnerability, blue eyes staring at him in unfathomable betrayal. “What have you done to me Hannibal?” He asked quietly.

“Hold on,” Leaving Will alone momentarily, Hannibal retrieved his first aid kit before crouching down in front of the chair. Reaching for his hand, Hannibal shivered at the sight of Will’s blood pooling around the jagged pieces of glass piercing his skin.

“You don’t need to be angry over this Will, Alana will be safer with me then she would be with you.” Hannibal realised this was a threat in itself, but keeping her from becoming Will’s lover had kept her alive. Hannibal would not have been able to manage Alana’s influence over Will and craft him into the creature before him. The man was an instrument, beautiful to those that know how to play him, and Hannibal had perfect pitch.

He searched for Will’s eyes under his veiling curls, finding the unyielding blue staring straight at him. “You haven’t asked me today if I still fantasize about killing you Doctor Lecter.” Will whispered in his ear as Hannibal bent forward to gently remove the glass from the wound.

Grazing at him through his fringe, he wrapped a bandage around the bloodied palm. “And do you?”

“I’m practically consumed by you, its all I dream of.” Will breathed softly looking at him with a quiet sense of fear. “With stags and ropes I aim to squeeze the truth from you, but you just lament your need for…”

“Need for what?” He knew Will was playing a game with him, they played it together. But Hannibal never played games he knew he wasn’t going to win. He enjoyed watching Will try to fool him with his receptive mask, but Hannibal would play this game till Will forgot how to remove it.

This was his design.

But it clearly wasn't Will's. The man was truly himself as he surveyed him with a dull confusion and Hannibal smiled. "Tell me Will."

The warm clammy hand that grasped his cheek surprised him. "*Me*." He breathed and the intimacy of the touch left Hannibal suspended before Will crashed their lips together.

Kissing Will was nothing like kissing Alana. Pliant and soft they had moved together in a dance, but with Will there were sharp angles and teeth. And lord Hannibal had never wanted something so much. Will didn't know how to lead or bend to Hannibal's responding pressure. It was simply a kiss of fierce abandonment. He tasted a beautiful rage on Will's lips, his desperation in the teeth that pulled at the flesh of his lip. Cupping that head of curls, Hannibal took control, swallowing Will's surprised gasp before he suddenly reeled back.

Remarkably flustered, Hannibal steady himself as Will managed to clamber away towards the door in flight. Eyes narrowing, he beat Will with ease, blocking his exit. Striding towards him, Will backed up slowly raising his bloody hand to his lips as he stared in horror. A powerful wave of desire shot through him as blood painted Will's lips and jaw. Breathing heavily, Hannibal caught him by the wrist, restraining him close to him. He hadn't anticipated it but staring at Will's lips Hannibal realised he wasn't adverse to the idea of taking Will as a lover. In fact, the idea of sharing his kills with his lover and only friend was extremely appealing.

Especially a man of Will Graham's calibre.

Raising the hand to his mouth, Hannibal licked a clean swipe next to the bandage, gathering the taste of Will's blood on his tongue. Savouring it like all his victims, Hannibal's palate affirmed that there really was nothing quite like the taste of Will Graham. Nothing could compare to the spiced, succulent heat hidden beneath that terrible aftershave. And nothing ever would. Will startled at his touch, a radiant heat building as a blush blossomed over that fair skin and Hannibal enjoyed the alarmed expression in his eyes. That Will hadn't anticipated this either, acting on pure instinct and need had Hannibal moving forward, cock filling with interest.

Grasping Will's waist, Hannibal kissed him hard, returning the fury of teeth as he sought to taste every drop of blood staining his face. Firm but heated, Hannibal bared down on him, drinking up the panic in those blue eyes. Drawing that lean body closer, Hannibal growled and ground his hips forward, grazing their arousals together. Despite his panicked gasp, Will responded, his hands rising to fist Hannibal's expensive shirt and hold them fast together.

Releasing his lips, Hannibal peppered kisses over Will's jaw to chase the trial of blood, savouring the moan that vibrated in Will's throat. With a lasting bite on his neck, Hannibal reclaimed Will's lips, losing himself in the almost violent need to consume Will completely. Unable to resist that flavour, Hannibal bite down into the plump swell of Will's lip, moaning as it filled their kiss with the taste of fresh blood.

Will yelped and pulled back, looking affronted. "You bit me."

"Mmm." Words long left Hannibal as he tried draw Will back to him.

“No- I—Hannibal I can’t.” Heady from the kiss, Will pushed him back with ease, backing away to the door. Moving quicker than he should have after such a heated kiss, Will grabbed his jacket and disappeared from the room before Hannibal could regain his senses.

Straightening up, Hannibal blinked the hunger from his mind, lest he follow and hunt Will down to an end he didn’t understand. It was a primal urge that Hannibal didn’t know he had. Ridding his life of the useless and incompetent was an instinct he had grown quite comfortable with, but this new desire had surprised him. He had felt it grow as he nurtured Will’s darkness into a thing of splendour, waiting until his friend actualised his full potential. The desperation and pain felt at Will’s absence from his side during his institutionalisation had been his first indication of the depth of his feelings for him. However for all the strange behaviour he displayed over Will, he hadn’t seen this coming.

Leaning against the edge of his office table, Hannibal trailed his fingers over his lips savouring their swollen feeling. No, this kiss signified a changing point in their game, and with it created a chance for Hannibal to control Will completely, ruling his mind, his instincts and his heart.

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No one can be fully aware of another human being unless we love them.

Express that love, our beloved's potential comes true.

Through that love, we allow our beloved to see their potential.

By that love we see potential in our beloved.

The words of Will’s subconscious repeated to him as he drove away from Hannibal’s office. They were all he’d thought of from the moment he stepped into the office, weaving their seduction until he’d felt the firm heat of Hannibal’s lips. *Fuck!* He slammed the wheel. His dreams often interfered with his life, but it was no reason to kiss Hannibal Lecter, the *Cheaspeake Ripper*. He veered his car off to the side of the road as the thought churned his insides. Since discovering Hannibal’s identity, Will had never been able to separate the two in his mind, the two personas bound together with chains. And now to think that he could desire that *monster.*

“I promise you a reckoning.”

Was he in any state to fulfil that promise after what he just did? Could he still bring Hannibal to justice knowing he had, if not feelings then at least romantic impulses towards the doctor? He clapped a hand over his mouth as he stared out the window at the snow filled

landscape. He had played the budding killer with constraints and conscience, the lure's last dying breath before it hooked into the fish. But it had gone wrong all because he was incapable of ridding himself of the thought of Hannibal with Alana. Would he leave their session to wine and dine her, before they fucked and lay in languid kisses afterwards? He couldn't bear the thought of it as Hannibal had tended to him so carefully, every touch increasing his longing and the need to forbid him from seeing her.

It was great injustice that the only person who understood and could be a true friend to him was a monstrous serial killer. A serial killer he now craved. If only Hannibal hadn't continued to talk of Alana, he wouldn't have had the impulse to claim him to ensure he would never go back to her. Yes he had wanted to remove Alana from Hannibal's side, and this could very well be the means to do it, but he wasn't supposed to feel like this. How could he continue down this path when kissing Hannibal fed that lonely, lustful creature resting deprived within him?

With this he would be further tied to Hannibal, he knew that. The trap was even more dangerous. Now, there were only two options, both of which required him to emerge himself in darkness. He would either survive Hannibal long enough to catch him, or he would succumb to Hannibal's persuasion, potentially faster under the sway of his wanton need. Maybe he had the chance to manipulate Hannibal first for he had responded to that kiss like a man possessed. Clearly he too felt something. The fierce, desperate grip at his waist, the teeth at his lips, the cock against his—. Will shivered even as a warm heat pooled in his stomach at the memory of Hannibal pressed against him. Beating Hannibal using their attraction was going to be a hard task on its own made worse by Hannibal's wariness of emotions, even his own.

But to go down this path meant he would have to let go of the agony within him. Since he'd learnt that Hannibal killed Abigail, he had held onto the pain her absence had left him with. It had kept him focussed around the Doctor, supported him during his persuasive lessons, as he waited, hoping Hannibal would say something incriminating. Yet he had confessed to nothing, acknowledging nothing save small amendments to their game, nothing to implicate him in anyway shape or form. Hannibal was in control and the man was unlikely to let him forget it. Will suffered no delusions that Hannibal was not aware of the trap he and Jack had laid. Most likely he anticipated trapping them first and by them, Will really meant himself. There was only one way he was going to be able to catch Hannibal first. To lure him close enough to win this game, Will would have to adapt, evolve and become what Hannibal wanted.

Whatever he wanted. Even if Will wanted it too.

First, he needed to let go his pain and turn from Abigail if he wanted to embrace the monster within him. He would never let her go, but he could no longer walk with her through his vivid imagination. She was the protector his morality, and only without her would he truly grow to Hannibal's demands. It was a necessary sacrifice but not one without risks, for letting her go would destroy the last defence against Hannibal's persuasion. And now more than ever he needed morality to remind Will why Hannibal had to be brought down and why, he couldn't be falling in love with him.

Pressing his forehead to the wheel, Will took a few moments to compartmentalise himself. He would ignore these feelings and allow his craving for power to unfold, to feel it reach its fingers throughout him. He would indulge in this desire, meanwhile wearing the skin of a kindred fallen angel for Hannibal's benefit and as long has the two didn't meet, their plan could work. He walked a thin line, one that would be made even harder by his attraction to Doctor Lecter. But he could no longer deny the hunger within which relished killing; he truly was a changed man, evolved by Hannibal's hand. When this was all over, there was a chance he would not be able to put himself together, even if he managed to avoid the consequences of his murders. Hannibal had broken him for the natural world, but it was oddly exalting.

He felt…awakened.

For the first time in weeks, Will felt truly at peace with himself, liberated by the freedom of acceptance. He was a monster, but he could control it and only for Hannibal would he indulge it power over him. *Only with Hannibal could he truly be himself.* The traitorous thought quickly suppressed, he returned the car to the road, listening to the quiet hum of the radio as fields of powdered white snow passed by. Later, as he lay in bed, he felt the soothing embrace of sleep wash over him, falling into a deep slumber unlike any he'd experienced in years. How strange that bringing a dark resolution to the mania of his mind had filled him with such a collected sense of serenity.

But it was hard it ignore how he wished he was encircled by Hannibal's powerful arms and not his blankets.

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Daiyonshō

Chapter Notes

> Hope it wasn't too early of a development, but here is some sexy time. I really wanted to try have a Hannibal who continues to think he has everything under control without realising what he feels for Will has him unravelling. I hope that comes across! Enjoy my darling Fannibals! Elliearna

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Will was comfortable playing his part, disturbingly so. The serenity he had gained never left him; growing stronger in the face of his acceptance. The tickling sensation of power thrummed under his skin as he slipped into their newest killer, who also wore a suit but of blood and bone that was not his own. Hannibal had remained blessedly silent about the kiss during their recent session, focussing instead on the lessons to be learnt from this Cave Bear killer, this Randall Tier. For that he was grateful, feeling a shameful fondness for the man he couldn't help but consider his friend, albeit a dangerous, murderous one. With the plan working so well, he was hesitant to exploit their attraction, mostly for fear of it backfiring on him.

A quieter part of him was more reluctant to hurt Hannibal, wishing instead that they were just men and not predator and prey. He realised that was unfair to Hannibal's character, knowing full well that the brilliant man considered him above mere prey. Although he certainly wasn't alone. There was an odd jealousy that accompanied the knowledge that Hannibal had persuaded other patients to embrace their darkness and a satisfaction found in the personal nature of their relationship. Hannibal wasn't just curious to see what happened with Will; he wanted him to become his companion, his family. He was determined to evolve him, have him embrace his intimate understanding of murder, only then would Will truly *see* him. He offered him glimpses in his character and his beliefs, like revealing his scorn of God. He seemed to believe himself a deity in his own right for the devastating beauty with which he had shaped his world. A beauty with which he could shape Will's.

And, like god, Hannibal sent Will a test of his faith.

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Hannibal was anticipating many great things to come from pitting Randall against Will but finding his body on his 16th century mahogany table was by far the best conclusion. “Even Steven.” Will had said, beautiful as he accepted the moment for what it was. There was no outrage that Hannibal had sent a murderer after him, simply a calm acceptance that it was to be expected. He had come a long way from the wrathful angel that had entered his office not a few days before hand. What a magnificent creature he had crafted. A creature who finally knew who controlled this game they played so exquisitely. A wave of lust swept through Hannibal as he moved around the table to reach Will.

The most exquisite instrument, Hannibal wanted to play Will at perfect pitch and shape the man into a walking piece of art. Never had he felt such a vehement desire to claim and own. Will brought out very primal instincts within him, not all he cared for. For instance the one now simmering in his stomach, filling him with an overwhelming warmth as it did whenever the man was around. It left him with a concerning feeling of vulnerability. It wasn’t love he was feeling, at least not in the conventional sense; Hannibal had lost the ability to feel truly for another after Mischa. But it was dangerously close enough and certainly as encompassing. He had thought of nothing else since their kiss but the need to possess Will. However, Will had behaved as though the kiss hadn’t happened, putting in all his effort to appeal to Hannibal’s desire to evolve him instead. An equally worthy distraction.

Finding Randall Tier dead was the making point in Will’s development, because now he could no longer deny the exaltation he had felt killing him. Only time would tell how long it would be before Will could no longer ignore the reality of his dark truth and their growing thirst for each other.

But Hannibal was a patient man.

Moving across the marble floor, the steady rhythm of his gait was interrupted only by the slicken sound of flesh parting. Hannibal continued to walk about the upper level of the Museum, pausing only briefly to watch Will place a piece of Randall Tier’s flesh over the skeleton. Though he longed to linger and study the design, if he paused for too long, Will would halt in his artistry and fix him with a look.

It wasn’t that he was intimidated by an audience; rather, Hannibal created a looming pressure as he salivated over the Will’s design. He was transfixed as he watched his enriched Will craft an impeccable piece of art. To see him finally giving into the urges, cultivating them as the inspirations they were meant to be was truly sublime. And now, maybe he too would see the true potential of their bond. Maybe he would recognise that their bond was craved from more than this courtship of matched uniqueness; it was one of aloneness and need. And Hannibal *needed* Will intensely.

He hadn’t been able to forget the hot press of Will’s lips under his, the sweet rage he stole from that unruly mouth with his tongue. He knew Will was angry at him for his allure, for driving his emotions to see past his nature and find attraction, leaving flaws in his little plan. He'd tasted the desperation on those lips as Will tried to understand what his body

wanted as it rebelled against the logic of his mind. It was a feeling of uncertainty that Hannibal could relate to. There had been rare moments throughout their relationship that Will had pushed too far or acted too dangerously where Hannibal had contemplated killing him. But every time he failed to convince himself of why life without Will would be better, despite the beautiful ways he could imagine displaying his friend. He would be commemorated, not humiliated like all the others, but Hannibal much preferred the idea of savouring his body in other ways.

The drive from the museum was blissfully silent, allowing Hannibal time with his thoughts. Will sat in the passenger seat looking at his hands in a mix of fascination and disgust. It seemed he was realising the mask he wore could not exempt him from the passion with which he had memorialised Randall. Hannibal smiled smugly. This game they played was simply delightful for as Will continued to perform for Hannibal on behalf of the FBI, they were provided with ample opportunity for Will to adjust. Hannibal could fine tune Will's new instincts, whilst allowing him to think it was part of the persona and when the time came he would see that the mask was never really there. It was in moments like this that Will grew the most. When he realised with stark clarity the gravity of the situation, he would also see how Hannibal stood beside him, embracing all of him, even those parts he tried desperately to suppress.

After all, everyone in Will's life had done their best to separate him from the world, forcing him to consider himself alone, a rare and unwanted creature. They denied him the very belief that he could be understood and the thing all humans craved; acceptance. But Hannibal wanted him all, broken edges and frayed beliefs. His ragged treasure.

Pulling up into the driveway, he turned to face a silent Will. Though he returned his gaze with an expression of unfathomable nonchalance, emotions flickered wildly within his eyes betraying his state of mind. He couldn't completely shield his empathy from the nature of his actions, the thought of being a killer was tearing at his mind, and it was simply breath-taking to watch. Leaving the car, he led Will towards his opulent Baltimore home and held the front door open, ushering him in. As he passed, Hannibal had to control the predatory impulses Will's silted movements and vulnerability generated within him. That fervent need to devour and ruin him in this weakened state.

"It was masterful wasn't it?" Will murmured under his breath, as they entered the kitchen, Hannibal removing his jacket and filling a prepared bowl full of warm water. "Intimate, presented with purpose. I really did this." Will dragged a hand over his face, panic entering the low timber of his voice. Cocking his head to the side, Hannibal contemplated whether Will needed distance or comfort as he set the bowl down on the travertine counter. It would be so easy to take advantage of his shaken faith in himself and affirm his faith in Hannibal. Guiding him to lean against the edge with a soothing hand he began tending to the copious amount of blood staining that fair skin.

"You have finally realised your true gift." Lifting his jaw, Hannibal cleaned the blood off Will's weary face, memorising every ridge and angle of the flesh under his hands. Will was truly a beautiful man, soft and gentle in the right places whilst raggedy and haunted in all the wrong ones. He relaxed slightly under his touch and Hannibal gave a half smile. Everything about this moment was perfect. He really must congratulate himself. Everything

had seemed lost when Will was imprisoned, especially when he regarded Hannibal with such contempt, but he had changed the will of this fascinating man. Finally releasing his hate in order to catch him, Will had opened a door that brought him that much closer to becoming everything Hannibal knew he could. With each door Will unlocked, Hannibal barred the one behind. He would never be able to undo what he had done, just as he would never truly be able to leave Hannibal. He was under his skin now. In Will he had a companion, a killer, a *friend* and maybe a lover.

"My gift is murdering people?" He asked incredulously, those conflicted blue eyes watching as Hannibal washed his hands down and changed the bandage around his knuckles.

Hannibal paused, staring at him through his fringe before shrugging. "Surviving and creating things of beauty. Making Art of useless pieces."

Will hummed, flexing his fingers in wonder and Hannibal smiled, understanding the sheer awe one felt over the rich power that came from such beauty and violence. Will released a heavy sigh and when those stormy eyes turned to him, the conflict was gone. All that remained was a thirst and Hannibal felt another surge of desire and ownership. He wanted to pull the jacket from Will's body and savour its blood soak fabric. In such a delicate situation he should behave with dignity and persuade Will to embrace this experience, but all he wanted to do was push him down and fuck him. It wasn't as though he hadn't been thinking about it since the kiss.

Will had been watching him with hungry eyes while they played this game of cat and mouse, quite consciously he was sure, trying to entice him further and Hannibal was just about sick of it. Will played a dangerous game trying to manipulate his desires, he would find though, that Hannibal never really played fair; he played to survive, to win. In this moment, covered in blood, he felt the impulse to try and break that supple body just to own him completely. To carve open his chest and steal his heart, devouring its roasted flesh with port and rosemary. He had thought long and hard over exactly what part of Will he would consume and decided he would take his courageous heart, but in truth he wouldn't allow anyone else to have him utilising every part of him, relishing each bite.

But now there was a more tempting means of consuming Will, something surprisingly far more interesting. Possessing Will romantically and sexually could very well tip him over the edge, the indecision within him shattering his morals and resistance of Hannibal's methods. Will would be his completely, FBI, Jack, Alana be damned. Once he had Will, it would be time to leave, but not without making Jack and Alana know exactly what they had lost. He would show them how their William had grown into something beautifully cruel and all his.

Tilting his head to the side, Will ran his fingers over the pressed collar of Hannibal's shirt, a crease in his brow. "I was flesh and bone bound by nervous energy and a masochist insight into the macabre artistry of killers. I hate what I couldn't help but see, I hate it and I loved it, but what am I now? Something much worse?" The question was genuine as he met his eyes with honest, lost wonder.

"You were potential, Will, now you are power. But you were not a blank canvas went I met you, you were so much more. Like an instrument tuned to the wrong key. Now you ring

with true tone." Removing the jacket from Will's shoulders, he enjoyed the shudder his hands left in their wake as he trailed them down those long arms. Will's pulse fluttered in staccato as he began wiping the blood from the fair skin at the hollow of his throat.

Swallowing hard, Will moved closer into Hannibal's space, a dark look filling up the blue in his eyes. "Do you like the music I play for you Hannibal?" The seductive lilt to his voice had Hannibal pause, lifting his gaze to meet the uncontrolled want in those eyes. "Its eerie music rings beneath my pulse. You've played me with such skill that only you can hear it, but that's what you wanted isn't it? For me to become the creature you always wanted Doctor Lecter."

Truly, he had never wanted anything more in his life.

Blood still splattered across his cheekbones, curls veiling his face Will moved forward, those darkened blue eyes boring into him. This time he was ready when Will crashed their lips together, savouring how they grasped at each other with unrefined grace, teeth clashing. Will's hand slipped down to undo his vest, sliding it over his shoulders to the floor. Remarkably Hannibal wasn't affected in the slightest as the expensive fabric crumpled around their feet. Lost in a kiss too long awaited, he was drunk on the truly mesmerising way Will could articulate everything he was feeling through the kiss. That contained wrath, burning lust and bitter taste of self-loathing.

Absolutely delightful.

Hannibal's hands wound around Will's waist, savouring the feeling of his body pressed against him, radiating heat. Still young and built of lean muscle, Will made a powerful and diligent killer. Under Hannibal's ministrations and refining, he would be an exceptional force to be reckoned with. Unbuttoning Will's grey-blue shirt, Hannibal bent and pressed his mouth to his pulse. Biting the fluttering skin he moved down his clavicle, worshiping him, devouring him bit by bit to leave his mark across that fair canvas. Grazing his teeth over his nipple, Will's light groans turned into a growl and he jerked back from the assault.

Hannibal smirked in delight at the red marks blossoming across those angular collarbones. *Mine.*

He hissed in surprise as Will pushed him against the stainless island counter, biting savagely at his neck. Taken aback by the show of dominance, Hannibal allowed Will to pin him there with his hips, those eyes full of murder and lust. A hand reached up and wrapped around his tie, pulling it tight, successfully shortening his air supply.

"*Fuck you*." Will hissed into his ear and Hannibal grinned.

Will had confessed to imagining his face instead of Tier's, fantasizing still about killing him, but there was no honesty in this, there never really was. Hannibal was under his skin and Will liked it too much to be rid of him completely. He may want to kill him, but he didn't want it enough. Even now with Hannibal vulnerable Will wasn't applying the sort of pressure to kill him. But the mouse wanted control. Hannibal was perfectly happy indulging him with the briefest moment of power over him, if only to encourage the fierce challenge in his eyes. As long as he knew in the end who held all the cards.

Will pressed his hips hard into him, placing the hand holding the tie on the bench behind Hannibal, effectively stretching him back. Bracing himself on his elbows to relieve his neck, he grit his teeth and Will rubbed their bodies together lewdly. Sacrificing himself to tighter constriction, Hannibal leaned forward to watch as Will rutted against him, the scratching friction of their pants maddening. There was an edge to Will's eyes as he yanked his collar open, a button visibly shooting across the room.

"Will." Hannibal reprimanded.

Will bit down on his lip in reply flooding their kiss with the taste of hot metal, and Hannibal thickened substantially at the lewd moan Will gave. However it seemed Will didn't appreciate that Hannibal was and always would be the one in control, ripping open the finely pressed white shirt. Growling, Hannibal pulled forward against the tie, fury settling as Will bent over to bury himself in his neck. His hand moved up his chest, carding through the hair there before dipping down to Hannibal's waist band, releasing the clasps on his belt. Stepping forward, Will slipped his leg in between Hannibal's and pressed forward, his hand finding purchase on his lower back. Hannibal quirked an eyebrow at the adorable display of dominance, but he wasn't one to remain pliant not when his body ached to undo Will and possess him completely. Shifting his weight onto one elbow, he slipped a hand down between them and blatantly grabbed Will's cock, feeling it twitch. Will moaned, hips impulsively jerking forward. His body shook as Hannibal teased him with deft fingers, straightening up as the pressure on the tie was released.

"Remarkable boy." He whispered in his ear before he was yanked back by his hair to stare into angry eyes. Will's grip in his hair was unkind and the teeth that flew to the exposed flesh of his neck were savage, tongue lapping over deep biting marks he left.

Whilst he certainly wasn't averse to the biting, he'd give Will enough power for tonight. They were equals in many ways but Will belonged to Hannibal. It was as simple as that. If Alana even touched Will now romantically or sexually he would kill her. He'd probably kill Will too. Hannibal possessed him. He could never leave him; Will belonged to him. And it was time he knew that.

"Hannibal!" Grabbing the back of his thighs, Hannibal hauled Will into the air, those hands frantically grabbing at his shoulders, releasing the ruthless grip on his hair in the process. Turning round, he pushed Will against the bench making him grunt as the force pushed the air from his lungs.

"Stay." He growled and surprisingly Will did, however not without serving him a petulant but wary glare. Removing his trousers and underwear Hannibal smiled back at him, proud that Will knew not to push him too far. Another admirable quality. Moving in between his open legs, Hannibal grasped the hands that reached out for him, holding them to the bench and ground down, savouring Will's blissed out expression. Giving a short thrust, Hannibal felt the hard line of Will's cock and released his hands to pull his hips closer. Diving down, he took the full flesh of Will's lip and sucked hard enough to hurt, releasing him only to swallow the delightful whine Will made in his throat. Kissing him deeply, Hannibal removed Will's shirt, languidly moving his hands over the smooth flesh beneath his fingers.

His stomach was soft to the touch, but Hannibal could feel the powerful muscle beneath tense as he cradled those pronounced hipbones and slowly ran his hands up. What he really loved though was his collarbones. Those sharp beautiful angles cradling the sensitive flesh he loved to devour. Unable to resist Hannibal left Will's lips to like a clean swipe up the tendon along his neck, his hands playing along that delightfully bare skin. What a startlingly contrast to a man so raggedy.

"Hannibal…" Will hissed impatiently, bumping his hips forward. Grasping his curls Hannibal tilted Will's head to the side, kissing a path down his neck as his other hand opened Will's jeans. Pushing them down over his narrow hips, he dragged them off with Will's shoes, throwing them into a pile behind them, kissing his way back up his thighs. Reaching his groin, Hannibal mouthed the straining cock through dark underwear and a hand shot out to hold him there. Sucking the tip, he moved to stand only to have Will grasp him securely around the neck, pushing him down again. It seemed he'd spoken too early as Will was still unaware of who exactly was controlling this. Overpowering his hold, he stood tall and grasped Will's ass roughly, grinding hard. Pulled onto his toes Will moaned, hands scrambling across Hannibal's shoulders as he sought to regain his balance.

"That sort of behaviour won't do, not in my kitchen." Hannibal crooned before grasping Will's shoulders and flipping him over. Will made a noise of disgruntlement as Hannibal bent him over the bench. Getting his hands underneath him he tried to push up and shift Hannibal's weight off his back, but it was futile. An admirable attempt, but Will could not match him physically. When he'd finally relaxed under his weight, Hannibal pushed his stance wider, before pressing his hips flush into the ample rise of his ass. Thrusting forward, Hannibal gave a pleased hum while Will gasped and stretched out to find purchase on the other side of the bench.

In his haste, he knocked over a bottle of cooking oil and Hannibal tutted at him fondly. "I keep a clean kitchen William, how rude of you to soil it." Moving his weight off him, Hannibal was pleased to see Will stayed pressed to the bench, looking over his shoulder at him. He wore a bold expression, not meek or unwilling, but challenging and alive. Slipping Will's underwear down his legs, Hannibal gathered up the spilt oil and coated his fingers thoroughly.

"It would be such a waste." He drawled as he placed a hand between Will's wing bones and pushed him down.

Will tensed, straining to look at him with suddenly alert clear eyes. "Hannibal I haven't…."

Kissing his shoulder blade, Hannibal straightened up, running his fingers down the cleft of Will's cheeks. "I can be gentle Will." He purred, circling the puckered entrance with the oily pad of his thumb. "*Sometimes*."

Dropping his head to the counter, Will released a deep breath and the resistance under Hannibal's thumb gave way allowing him to press the digit in deep. The throaty groan Will gave went straight to his cock, pushing him into the full blown erection he had been trying to suppress. Lust made him hasty and he didn't wish Will's first time to be unpleasant, no matter how insatiable and vehement his desire for him was. Twisting his finger without caution, Will

jolted forward gasping in pain and he paused to push back the haze of impatience. Apologetic, he reached around and grasped Will's flagging erection, softly coaxing it back to life as he removed his thumb gently. After a while Will's legs began to tremble, husky moans falling from his lips and Hannibal smirked into the flesh of his back.

He was absolutely breath-taking. A fiery lover at first, he submitted so exquisitely, body shaking under his ministrations. It made him feel powerful in a way he'd never experienced before. He wanted to be the only one to give Will pleasure like this, and such exalting pain. Releasing him, Will whined at the loss and pushed his hips back eagerly, much to Hannibal's delight. Massaging the rim of Will's hole, he slowly coaxed him open again before slipping a long finger in deep. Will bared down on him in surprise and he relished the tight, lush feeling around his finger, especially the way it tightened to hold him as he withdrew.

"Delicious." He growled and poured more of the oil over his fingers, ignoring the drips it left on the bench and floor to bend over Will's awaiting form. Slipping his finger back into that clenching hole, he groaned at the lack of resistance, immediately thrusting a second alongside it.

"Hannibal—!" Will's protest was cut off by a well-placed bite to neck, voice dropping into a lewd groan.

Such pleasing noises. Allowing him to adjust to the intrusion, Hannibal reached forward and grasped that pretty head of curls, causing Will to release a sharp grunt. He held him there, neck arched back as he pumped his fingers into that tight heat, watching avidly as that delicious body trembled, back muscles rippling. Though controlling his desire to rush, he indulged himself in a little of Will's pain, scissoring him with wide strokes to increase the frequency of those charming sounds.

He manipulated his fingers to stretch and brush at those places that made Will gasp and push back, his eagerness spurning Hannibal into a punishing pace. Inserting a third finger, Will tilted his pelvis to accept it smoothly with a low hum and Hannibal had to pause to gather himself. Sweat trailed down his temple and he took the moment to simply look at what he had done. Their game of cat and mouse forgotten, Will had come undone, his knuckles white as they clenched the bench, neck still arched in Hannibal's grip. Twisting his fingers up and he fucked Will deep and hard. It was a sight to behold, Will clenching around him as he pounded that sensitive bundle of nerves within him. At a particularly well aimed thrust, Will yanked his head forward and out of his grasp, thick drops of precum falling to the floor while his knees buckled.

"Nggh…enough Hannibal." He shuddered, yet worked his body slowly over the now stilled fingers. Rumbling deep within his chest, Hannibal withdrew his fingers and nestled his cock between Will's cheeks. He caressed the curve of his hips, thumbs kneading into that taut flesh as he rocked gently forward, moaning with Will at the delightful slick sensation.

"I won't be kind. Not now." He warned slicking himself with oil before pressing the head of his cock to the slicken entrance, feeling clench in anticipation. Without waiting for a reply, he pushed forward, groaning as he slipped smoothly through the ring of muscle. Sound seemed to catch in Will's throat as he raised himself onto the balls of his feet, shaking all

over, fingers flexing around the bench edge. The heat was almost searing as it held him deep, the muscles rippling around his width as he withdraw roughly, Will's loud gasp punctuating the air.

Wasting no time he pulled Will back onto his cock, groaning as he glided smoothly in, thighs pressing close to the cheeks that delectable ass. Setting a punishing rhythm he felt his pleasure begin to build at the luscious sight of Will's body stretched around him, trembling and groaning with each thrust. He smirked and pulled out slowly, running his fingers down Will's spine at his whine of frustration. Reaching for more oil he coated himself and met Will's dazed but heated gaze as his lover ground his body back into his cock.

"Impatient aren't you?" He slipped back in, taunting and teasing him with shallow, deliberate thrusts. The sounds of their bodies meeting with each tantalising dip made an obscene and pleasing melody that matched the hitches in Will's breath. Curling his body around Will, he reached his hands out to thread their fingers together, pulling them away from the edge. With this change, Will could now arch his hips up to meet each languid push, body tightening further, increasing that maddening friction.

"Ah-hh…Hannibal, just f-fuck m—." Hannibal bit down on the flesh of Will's neck as he slammed back in and Will shouted. The pressure around his cock was oppressive as Will tried to adjust to the shock of the deep penetration, time Hannibal was unwilling to give him. He was unforgiving as he filled that pulsating heat, savouring the way Will's fingers flexed around his own as his body strained to meet each thrust. His voice had become guttural and disjointed as Hannibal fucked him hard, panting heavily in his ear, those soft curls pressed to his cheek.

Such an exquisite melody he played for him, and him alone, but Hannibal wanted more. He wanted to claim Will and ruin him for everyone else. He would make it so Will would never be able to forget the feeling of his weight, the full stretch as he accepted him, the depth of Hannibal's claim on his body. He felt himself grow more animalistic, uncharacteristically lost to his desires but he was too far gone to stop now. He would make it so that Will could never leave him. Releasing his hands, Hannibal removed the tie from around his neck. Widening the loop he slipped it over Will's head to pull him up flush against him. Will's hands flew to his neck, spluttering in surprise before a sharp thrust had him drop them to brace himself on the bench.

"Nngh! H-Hannibal!" He exclaimed as Hannibal gave a forceful push, slamming his hips into the bench. Forcing Will's head back he mouthed kisses over that delectable skin, his free hand curling around to grasp his straining cock.

"You. Are. Mine." He punctuated each word with the slamming of his hips, apathetic of the bench edge biting into Will's front. Moans fell from Will's lips, slowly but surely growing in volume and Hannibal began to falter as his orgasm peaked. Gritting his teeth, he pulled back on the tie and roughly jerked at Will's cock, causing a violent shake in those pale thighs. Suddenly Will pushed off the bench, a hand reaching up to grasp Hannibal's hair, the other latching onto his hip to hold them close together.

"Come for me, come for me beloved." Hannibal groaned in his ear, orgasm wrecking through his body, hips jerking sporadically as he emptied himself deep within that clenching

heat. Will shouted as he came on command, spilling over Hannibal's hand to stain the bench, his pulsing walls milking Hannibal into oversensitivity.

As the final waves passed, they both sunk to their knees, bracing their weight against the bench. Panting together, Hannibal ran his hands up and down Will's side, mouthing warm kisses over the vicious bites covering his neck. Will sighed contently in his arms and squeezed experimentally much to Hannibal's discomfort. Shifting back, Hannibal slipped himself out, eyes drawn to sight of semen trickling from Will's flushed hole. His mind was delightfully blank as he pushed his fingers back into that heat, the muscles clenching down as Will groaned.

His heart felt like it was about to burst under such oddly intense feelings of tenderness and affection. The survivalist and creature of habit within him hoped it was just a wave of post-orgasmic emotions, fearing the depth of what he truly felt for Will Graham. If they were true, then this would certainly be the first time his intellect had failed to prevent him from making such a grievous mistake. Playing this game with Will had just become more of a risk then he had originally thought, because if there was one thing Hannibal couldn't govern, it was his emotions. Especially those he had spent separated from for so long.

Slipping off his fingers, Hannibal watched as Will turned in his arms, curls mussed and eyes glazed and tender. Cupping his face, Will kissed him passionately, nibbling at his pliant mouth, tongues tangling together in a languid dance. Grasping his back Hannibal cradled him close as Will carded his hands through his chest hair to rest gently around his neck. While they kissed, Hannibal's mind began to reboot and analyse how he could recover from such a exposed situation. At this moment they were both prey to the desires of flesh and heart, but there was still a game to be won.

Control. Power. He needed them back, he couldn't allow himself to succumb to these growing emotions, not when so much was at stake. But he didn't want to lose this warmth, the scent of Will and sex so strong in his nose. It was all he never knew he wanted. But their game was still in play and Hannibal had to come out on top. Blood returning to his body he regained his feet, pulling Will with him.

"What are you doing?" Will drawled, unstable as he swayed against him.

Hannibal gazed at him fondly, relaxing as the man smiled dopily at him. It would be alright, for not matter what emotions were beginning within him, Will was utterly lost to his own. He belonged to him now, and Hannibal would make sure he craved him body and soul. As long as he kept his own vulnerable affection in check, he could use this development in their relationship to further his control over him till Will was completely enthralled. If he played this right, Will would fall further under his sway and rise a creature of murderous instinct that was completely his.

And then, after they had left this life behind, maybe Hannibal would be free to explore these, powerful feelings for Will. For now he couldn't let them cloud his judgement or blind him. Kissing Will gently, he grasped hold of the tie still secured around Will's neck.

"Come." Hannibal whispered in his ear, leading him out of the kitchen by the tie. Will acquiesced taking a few steps before stopping suddenly. Raising an eyebrow at this

disobedience, Hannibal turned back to see Will flushing a startling shade of red.

"I—umm," he coughed not meeting Hannibal's eyes. "Can I use your shower? I appear to be umm…"

Hannibal was saddened by the loss of the sleep, well fucked Will, for now an alert wariness had entered his eyes. He did however enjoy the scarlet blush staining those cheeks. Not ready to let him go quite yet, Hannibal embraced him again, staring into Will's wide eyes. "But of course, it is upstairs." He smiled and both of them knew he had avoided directing him to the downstairs bathroom. Cautiously, Will reached up to kiss him but neither closed their eyes, watching each other carefully.

The blissful absence of reality was gone and the game had resumed. This suited Hannibal well, for it was the environment within which he thrived. Releasing him, Hannibal watched as Will left for upstairs, cocking his head at the delightful slick line trailing down the back of his thighs. Sighing he turned to survey the mess of the kitchen and moved to return it to the order he prided himself in. It helped to shuffle away the passionate emotions thrumming throughout his body, trying to impose their influence on his mind. But Hannibal had greater control than that. He may have lost himself in the influx of need and desire, but such emotions could be moderated.

Finishing up, he ducked in the down stairs shower to quickly rinse himself off, fingering grazing the possessive bite mark on his shoulder. Now that he knew such passionate emotions lay beneath his surface, he could suppress them to concentration on exploiting Will's instead. With this driving focus, he would lay waste to all Will knew and remake him in his own image. A little emotion would not jeopardise his tireless effort to draw out Will's violent desires. He wouldn't let it.

Slipping on a pair of loose pants he wandered upstairs to find that Will had not used the main, but rather his personal en suite. In any other circumstance, with anyone else, even Alana, Hannibal would find this frightfully discourtesy, but seeing Will standing in his bedroom, freshly washed; he felt he belonged there. Desire ran through him and he realised these emotions had a faster grip around him than he was prepared to admit. His body demanded he take him again, his heart craved it and his mind, his collected, unfathomable device of knowledge and control *wanted* it. But he denied it, he had too, although not completely.

No words were spoken as Hannibal took Will's hand and led him to the bed, laying him down under satin sheets, the dark colour bringing out the ruby in the savage marks littering that pale skin. Perching over him, Hannibal traced the marks with his tongue, sucking hard at those that threatened to fade, shivering as Will's hand grasped his head in encouragement. There was a clarity to their actions now that was not present in the aftermath of the bloodlust they shared over Randall Tier. It was dark and poisonous, but lush and enthralling. Pressing his hand into the pillow beneath Will's head, Hannibal kissed him softly and gently trying to communicate all he could not act on, all he could not allow himself to feel into that one kiss.

When he pulled away, Will's eyes were wide in wonderment and he raised a hand to cup Hannibal's jaw. Kissing him sweetly, Hannibal shifted to curl around Will's body, pulling

him close into the curve of his body. Flush against each other, he nuzzled at his neck, sighing as Will thread their fingers together.

“Goodnight Hannibal.” Will breathed into the darkness.

“Goodnight my dear William.” Hannibal murmured in reply, and though he close his eyes and evened his breath, he did not sleep until Will fell deeply into the throes of slumber. Because a part of him feared that when he awoke, Will would be gone as if none of this had happened.

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Daigoshō

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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The swelling crescendo of an orchestra pierced through the blanket of sleep clouding Will's mind and he opened his eyes blinking blearily. Paralyzed by fear of his unknown location - an unfortunate side effect of his sleepwalking days - Will processed where he was and how he had gotten there. Realising he was in Hannibal's bed was significantly more frightening then wandering somewhere off route 96, because it meant he had severely screwed up. He remembered last night, every hair rising, body aching moment of it and bit his lip as his cock twitched in interest. How could he have been so foolish as to let things go so far? He knew letting go and unleashing himself on Randall would have consequences, but he never thought he would lose control over his desires so easily. But the power that had settled quietly over him blinded him to the consequences of his supressed want.

And how he had wanted Hannibal.

So *foolish.* But as Hannibal had watched him with such shameless pride he'd wanted to draw him in and consume the strength he emitted, indulge in the desire that filled his chest with need. Pressing his body to Hannibal, drawing blood from his lips and holding him constrained had filled Will with such a delightful sense of control. But it was nothing compared to the thrill of being utter powerless as Hannibal opened him up, claiming him, cock stretching his body, the slow burn threatening to make him come there. That deep seated fullness filled the lustful creature within him. But when Hannibal called him beloved as he came undone, Will knew he was losing himself to this man who could dispel his loneliness. In that final moment as Hannibal kissed him so dearly, he offered Will a glimpse into the cautious heart of a killer and it was breath-taking.

An arm uncurled from where it was draped around his waist and Will felt his stomach clench as Hannibal left his side to grab his phone. The impulse to pull him back down into the sheets was overwhelmingly strong. Gritting his teeth he struggled to separate his feelings from their game – this couldn't change anything. Catching Hannibal went beyond this affection, for the man would kill countless others if Will didn't follow through with the plan. He couldn't afford to lose himself. Squeezing his eyes shut he tried to release the panic filling him as he was overloaded with conflicting emotions. He wanted to tell Hannibal everything, flee the country with him and run from the ghosts of Beverly and Abigail that shamed him for caring for such a monster. But to what end, what would their lives be? Hannibal would accept and indulge him; never again would he feel constrained for his understanding of murder. But there was a chance he would become nothing but a cracked mirror image of

Hannibal, needing to kill as much as his lover. How long until Will became so predatory that he killed innocents like Beverly and Abigail?

He opened his eyes, latching onto the vision of the people he'd lost to Hannibal. That was why he had to be caught, no matter the cost. Will had crossed a line in killing Randall Tier, one that may place him in a cell alongside Hannibal. It could be construed as self-defence, but he knew the pleasure he had felt claiming his life was real. He'd known it would happen, known the dangers and yet he had willingly allowed Hannibal's infernal desires to consume him. That battle was lost, Will was now a killer. Hannibal had changed him in so many ways, but he had changed him too. The glimpse offered to him last night proved that. Will may have sacrificed his innocence and morals, but he was still a lure to Hannibal's destruction and his own. Perhaps together they would fall?

"Good morning Jack." Hannibal's voice was husky from sleep, his accent stronger than usual. It had a seductive lilt that warmed Will in unexpected ways as he continued. "Yes of course, ah—mmm. Perhaps his phone is turned off."

Will turned his head to see Hannibal staring at him, soft hair resting freely about his face, mussed from sex and sleep. He could hear Jack asking after him and watched Hannibal cautiously, curious as to what this dangerous man would give away and what lies would roll off that gifted tongue.

"No need to worry detective, Will is currently sleeping in the guest room. I'm afraid our late dinner was accompanied by the consumption of too much alcohol to return him to Wolf's Trap." Simple and irrefutable, Hannibal cocked his head and even Will could hear the suspicious silence at the other end of the line.

Still sleepy Hannibal had less control over the mask of his features and Will witnessed a dark look cross his face as Jack spoke shortly to him before hanging up. Hannibal looked down at the receiver before tutting. "That was very rude Mr Crawford."

"Rude enough to eat?" Will couldn't resist asking and was surprised by the warm smile Hannibal gave him.

"Not feasibly." Hannibal moved closer, body tensed with hungry intent, but Will sat up and slipped out of bed quickly. Turning back quickly he saw a flash of hurt in Hannibal's eyes before that face was perfectly masked.

"What did he want?" He asked, running a hand over his elbow, suddenly very aware of the fact that he was only clothed in a rather tight pair of black underwear.

Hannibal composed himself, sweeping his hair back and Will longed to run his fingers through it and leave it untamed again. "Your commemoration of Randall has been found and Jack 'beckons' you to lay witness."

His anxiety was lost as a euphoric feeling of anticipation filled him. He closed his eyes and saw Randall before him, composed as the creature he truly was, a beast confined by human flesh. Will had crafted him into what he had always wanted to be. His imagination was vivid as he recalled his design but nothing could compare to the act of wrapping that

cold flesh around archaic bones, breathing life back into it - creating *art*. It was strange how the more he deliberated over his actions, the more reason and logic he found in them, that powerful sense of righteousness. Hannibal rose from the bed and walked towards him, hand stilling his fingers as they ran hypnotically over the bandage around his knuckles. Will hadn't even been aware he was doing it, the action so calming and yet it brought back that discreet feeling of control.

He wondered if he looked as unravelled as Hannibal did with small love bites scattered across his bare chest and a silent hunger lurking in sanguine eyes. Did Hannibal see the reflection of want he was trying hard to bury? A temptation they shared, but there was too much was a stake and yet Hannibal didn't seem to care. Why was he behaving like they could just fall in the sheets and ignore the world around them?

Unless…that was his play?

Will frowned and walked backwards out of Hannibal's grasp. He would have Will forget their game, lost to emotions. His lip curled. Maybe he even thought he'd already won him over. Will had killed and fallen into bed with him, but did he think it was that easy? He was not some blushing virgin willing to give his heart to the man after one fuck. Though he was certainly more deeply enthralled by the man then he thought.

"I need my clothes Hannibal." He said, avoiding his eyes.

"Of course, they're drying downstairs." Hannibal had moved into his space again, sending him back into the wall with no escape. His arms caged him against the wall and Will shivered as he recalled their strength as they pulled him back with each thrust.

His hand rose to caressed his cheek, but Will turned his head away. "Stop it, I- this can't, I don't know what this means."

Playing innocent could work to his advantage, but the sentiment was true. Hannibal's directness was oddly off putting as he pursued him without restraint. Will knew how to manage a reticent, cautious Hannibal, but this effusiveness he had left Will grasping for the right reaction. He knew his empathy was rare, gifted some had said, but no one seemed to realise the daily pressure he lived with to 'moderate' the emotions of the world and separate himself from them. Instinctively he tried to personalise himself with them, but that was a skill reserved for the FBI's use only. One thing Hannibal had always offered him was silence, perfect radio silence. Though his mind was free to influence, around Hannibal his emotions were his own. In his office, in his home, Hannibal's perfect image was always unspoiled by the busyness of emotions, focused solely on just one, control. That was the security and stability Will latched onto. He was sure Hannibal fostered that dependency all the same, helping him find the clarity needed to clear him of the empathic transferences that clung to him after his daily interactions.

Now Hannibal was turning this knowledge against him, weighing Will down with the overwhelming pressure of his want, reducing his ability to suppress his own feelings. The fucker.

“Join me for lunch, after we view your work of art.” Hannibal tilted his jaw with a firm hand, forcing him to look at him and Will knew this was not a request, nor a demand, but irrefusable all the same. “Jack ‘insisted’ we be quick. Go shower, I’ll bring your clothes.” He removed his hand slowly, fingertips passing briefly over his lip.

With him gone, Will could finally breath again. The man was a dangerous, highly intellectual killer who should be all rights terrify him, but the poison of him had found its way deep into him. Hannibal was an allure that turned Will against his own reason. Looking down he groaned at the sight of his half-fledged erection and hoped to god Hannibal had somehow not noticed. Decidedly unlikely, Will sighed and stripped off, hopping into Hannibal’s immaculate granite shower.

Waiting for his erection to flag he set about cleaning himself, wincing at the tenderness of his behind. Noting the ludicrous array of marks covering his chest, some of which were crusted in blood Will sighed heavily. Ideally he should have been angry, but honestly he felt a strange sense of pride and ownership, one he was determined to tame before it got out of hand.

When he emerged Hannibal was waiting for him in the centre of the room, still dressed in loose flannel pants that hung dangerously low on his hips. A refined Hannibal suited the hedonistic excess of his home’s design, its rich colours, art and ephemeras. Even his room of cashmere upholstered walls and cerused oak floor communicated wealth and prestige. It matched the theatricality Will had come to associate with *Doctor* Lecter, but seeing him in a state of undress seemed to reflect the details that lay beneath. It was as though the essence of the room was laid bare, the landscape of a winter castle drifting solitarily amongst Japanese prints whispering of his past, the samurai armour a testimony to his training and strength. Waves of humanity swept through him, emotions he had thought absent from the man that was Hannibal Lecter. He swallowed the lump in his throat, returning his gaze to the exotic man in the center of the room. In return those eyes watched him warmly, colour an enriched liquid brown. He was an anomaly of beauty and danger, a refined creature of darkness, like nothing Will had ever encounter. But he couldn’t help but wonder, what bore him into the *thing* he was, what forged the darkness within him? Too late he realised that he had made an empathetic connection to the character of Hannibal, or at least the parts he wanted him to see, and yet, the need to know him was overpowering. Will *needed* to understand the design that was Hannibal Lecter.

“Come now Will.” Hannibal broke him out of his revenue, hand outstretched in invitation. Drifting closer, he couldn’t resist running his hand up the offered forearm, fingers grazing unconsciously over the scar along his wrist. As that arm quickly dropped away the moment was gone, Hannibal’s gaze sharpening and Will lowered his eyes.

Whilst he honestly felt satisfaction over causing Hannibal harm - a step towards vengeance for Beverly - there was a tendril of guilt that accompanied it. Not regret, but certainly guilt - for what he couldn’t say but it was there. It left him wondering what Hannibal thought of when he saw those marks every day. Did he think of his betrayal? Did he hate him for them? If not, why? Looking down at his hands he imagined the knotting scars climbing their way up his wrist and he sucked in a breath as the wounds split, black blood pouring down his palms onto the polished floor.

Hannibal sighed and grasped his jaw, pressing their lips gently together. Drawn from the vision Will swayed forward, allowing those warm lips to caress him in a sweet forgiving way as he floated on waves of chaotic emotions. With a curl of his lips, Hannibal withdrew and moved passed him, fingers grazing the edge of the towel encircling his hips. In his absence, Will tipped forward and as he regained his feet he heard a low chuckle. With a flash of irritation, Will twisted around, admonishment on his tongue. However, as Hannibal strode across the dark marble floor of the bathroom and slipped out of his pants, Will choked on his words. A red blush shot up his neck as he found himself admiring the strong angle of Hannibal's hips, his powerful thighs and rather taut behind. Whipping around to face the bed Will muffled an embarrassed cough. He was not particularly fussed over looks and physic, especially given the scarcity of companions willing to deal with his kind of 'crazy', but Hannibal was an incredibly attractive man. This was something he had registered before in an almost *biological* awareness, but now with intent and desire swirling about his head, Will could not deny; Hannibal Lecter was an *exceptionally* handsome man.

Realising he'd been standing aimlessly for a while he reached out for the pile of clothes on the bed and found that everything was warm to the touch, fragrant with a crisp, freshly pressed scent. Within the pile he also found a clean pair of underwear, clearly not his own and yet they appeared to be his size. With his old pair in a decidedly soiled state he slipped them on, ignoring - for the moment - why exactly Hannibal had underwear that fitted him. The shower stopped as he finished putting his socks and trousers on, leaving him to ponder the jacket laid out on the bed.

"Hannibal where's my—?"

"Gone I'm afraid." Will was proud that he did not jump as Hannibal interrupted from somewhere near his right shoulder. "Unfortunately your shirt was far too soiled to be worn again so I disposed of it. However, I have shirt or two cut to your frame." Walking past the bed, Hannibal pushed open a sliding door Will hadn't noticed to reveal a walk in wardrobe.

He blinked incredulously. "Why?"

Looking over his shoulder Hannibal smiled furtively. "I am prepared for anything."

That a situation like this was predictable of Will soured his mood greatly and he hovered near the bed unsure as to whether he'd wanted him to follow. He wasn't sure he wanted to be in such close quarters with Hannibal, especially with the man dressed only in a towel.

"Will."

It was funny how this was not expressed as a command and yet it was clear Hannibal was summoning him. Entering the wardrobe he was both charmed and irritated by the approving smile curling those smug lips. Huffing he stopped in the centre of the room, arms crossed as Hannibalmoved gracefully around the room collecting components of his attire. He was not a pet that could be beckoned and dismissed at his whim. He refused to give Hannibal that control over him, he didn't *own* him. Yet, as his eyes landed on the tall mirror at the end of the deep but well lit room, he realised denying his claim might be harder than expected - for Hannibal's mark was all but seared onto his body.

Under the clarity of light and reflection, his chest looked like it had been mauled, teeth marks swelling as the hickeys circling his neck darkened to a deep purple. Out of the corner of his eye Hannibal tightened his belt around dapper grey trousers, a smug curl set on his mouth. Despite his anger over the man's audacity, the exposure of the humanity beneath the Doctor Lecter's person suit filled him with disbelief. The man beneath was surprisingly compassionate and possessed such a curious playfulness, it was almost endearing. Truly he had no idea who - what this man before him was, but he longed to find out. However he needed to maintain an air of reluctance, forcing Hannibal to push and try for his affection.

He watched warily as the man approached and held open a shirt of fine red silk. "I can dress myself." Will grumbled but none the less allowed him to slip the soft fabric up his arms. Over conscious of Hannibal's hands near his bare chest as he buttoned him up, Will focused on the mirror in front on him. Drifting away from the moment he watched as a droplet of water travel down that strong back and along the ridges of silver scars. Once done up, Hannibal ran his hands down his shoulders and along his sides, humming in approval. In the pit of his belly he felt a churning and wondered - not for the first time - whether controlling his feelings should seriously be as hard as it was turning out to be. Empathy be damned, he was not supposed to feel so - enthralled! If Hannibal would just stop projecting such hunger maybe he could neutralise his own, but that would never happen if he didn't stop *touching* and *teasing* him whenever he wanted.

"*Fucker…*" he murmured despondently under his breath as Hannibal pulled on his own shirt.

Eyebrow arched Hannibal tutted. "Don't be rude."

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They finally managed to get to the crime scene but not without Will imagining licking up the droplets of water trailing from Hannibal's wet hair, much to his annoyance. It seemed a libido kept suppressed for so long was a monster upon awakening; Will receiving an erection from the mere sight of Hannibal suiting up, looking sharp and seductively dangerous. When exactly had he begun to desire such darkness? *When Hannibal made destruction so appealing,* his mind whispered traitorously.

However, leaving his bedroom, Hannibal seemed to return to the man he knew well, collected and convivially apathetic. With this change, he was finally able to breathe, freed from the cloud of sex and need. Exchanging simple conversation they took the time to consume a quick coffee without incident before departing for the Museum in Hannibal's sleek Bentley. There was a relaxing silence in the car that should have put Will at ease; instead it allowed him to focus of the subtle aches in his body and the nagging absence of Hannibal's touch. Meanwhile his mind insisted on tormenting him with scenes from the night before, the memories of that hot body pressed against him, the firm hand in his hair and husky groans in his ear. Because of this Will was fixated on the steady rhythm of Hannibal's breathing, following every shift he made, tortured by the man's proximity. When they pulled

up at the museum to see Jack awaiting them on the steps, Will found he was suddenly very apprehensive about facing the man.

"Ready beloved?" Hannibal breathed, tilting his red collar down to trail deft fingers over the angry bruise just hidden from view. Ridged with tension Will got out of the car, pulling a scarf and jacket on, hoping to conceal all Hannibal's marks from view. Yet he unconsciously found himself waiting for Hannibal to reach his side, shivering as those eyes roamed over him, maroon depths lingering on every point of claim, leaving Will hot and flustered even in the cold chill. Mounting the stairs, Jack observed their close proximity with suspicion, frowning when Will refused to meet his eyes as they entered the main foyer. Gazing upon his design they both stopped short, Hannibal's eyes closing briefly as his hand subtly reaching out to grasp Will's wrist. Attention drawn from the body before them, Will was mesmerised by the expression of reverence on Hannibal's face, sanguine depths glisten with pride and adoration as he bent close.

"Such macabre homage dear Will." He quietly whispered in a hoarse voice.

Riding on validating satisfaction, he watched Hannibal moved forward to examine the body, Jack slipping up behind him to fill them in on details they knew all too well. Listening intently as Hannibal made his assessments of the body, Will was amused by the ease with which Hannibal could lie with such conviction and sincerity. No wonder he had survived for so long undetected. But Will had nothing to hide, choosing to reveal the truth of commemoration behind this *killer's* intent, catching the half smile on Hannibal's face. Envisioning the kill again, he conversed with Randall, indulging in the memory of freedom and an imitate sense of becoming. Returning to reality, he shared limiting details with Jack, feeling the man's frustration roll off him in waves. In this moment Jack was nothing more than a pawn witnessing the scene he and Hannibal played together, struggling to comprehend the horror Will was capable of. Unbeknownst to Hannibal, Will had called the detective soon after he'd killed Tier in Wolf's Trap; illuminating him on how this could increase Will's allure, make Hannibal think he was winning him over. But he could see that Jack was questioning who's side he was really on as together they exchanged subtle compliments and disguised admission of acceptance.

Honestly, Will wasn't sure either, but Jack was right to fear what he was becoming. Killing Tier had buried Will's conscience and guilt deep, allowing him to feel the invigorating power that came with taking a life, that sick pleasure. He had finally released the darkness that had grown within him as he assumed every killer Jack had wanted him to, felt their consuming intent, the freedom and god like control that came with stripping another of life. But Hannibal anchored the ravenous violence, cultured it. Past the door he had opened within him, Will found himself composed and for the first time, he truly felt *alive.* He'd waited so long to feel the weight of life and solid existence that was solely his own, and he'd found it in killing Tier.

It was something he could never admit that to Jack. But at least now he wasn't alone, not when Hannibal understood his darkness so intimately. Though it was a dangerous secret they shared, the exposure offered him a strange, alluring comfort. Was this what Hannibal searched for within him, acceptance of his true nature, the rare and revealing comprehension of each other?

For years he had struggled to deal with the heady delight and pleasure his dreams of blood and murder gave him, unsure whether they were nightmares or wishful dreams. Now he had unleashed the darkness from his mind and given it form, he was overcome with a gentle peace. Free of fire and the plaguing terrors in his mind, Will was sharp and engaged, finally in control of his faculties - all of which he could focus on the sole purpose of catching Hannibal Lecter. But did he even want to anymore? Did he really want to trap the man that had allowed him to free his mind? Would it be worth losing this remarkable bond, this unfathomable man and returning to the shadow he was without Hannibal?

Walking out into the cold he saw Hannibal leaning against the side of his car, waiting for him, expression brightening just the slightest as he caught sight of him. His heart thrummed so wildly in his chest he had to stop and just breath. Never before had Hannibal look so open and welcoming, his hair untamed in the wind – just how Will liked it. He wrinkled his nose; since when did he have a preference for Hannibal's appearance?

"Will?" His accent always seemed to transform his name into an endearment, tone punctuated with poignant affection. Exotic and enticing, Will was drawn like a moth to the flame; there was no way he could deny it any longer. Not his attraction, nor his growing love - honestly he had always loved Hannibal in one way or another; it was what had made his betrayal so painful, so unbelievable. Their game be damned, he need to understand what he felt, the truth behind it. In the end it would be worth risking the trap, worth throwing it away if necessary, if it meant he could hold onto something so *precious* he would do it. Abigail's memory would forgive him, for she had loved the man too, her mentor and father.

Who killed her! His mind hissed at him, but it was too late to heed a warning he was no longer prepared to listen to. Ignoring Jack's call he slipped into the car, allowing Hannibal to whisk him away. Their game meant nothing for the moment; catch or be caught he didn't care anymore. But god if he didn't know it -

- he was so fucked.

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Chapter End Notes

This chapter was a bit long winded sorry. Tried to show Will's stages of acceptance. However, be warned this break in his resolve to catch Hannibal won't last. Actually split this chapter in two so next chapter should be soon! Hope you enjoyed lovelies.

Dairokushō

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

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Hannibal brought him to a quaint little restaurant near the university campus; one that Will didn't even know existed. Granted given his experience and social life, that really wasn't that surprising. Picking an outside, exposed table, Hannibal pulled out a chair and watched him expectantly. Raising an eyebrow Will caught the gazes of the restaurant's other patrons studying their exchange and stood his ground. Though he was consumed by his feelings for the man, he would not resign himself to the meek position in their relationship especially considering Hannibal's penchant for manipulation. He was not a toy, nor a blind fool simpering to Hannibal's powerful persuasion at least…well not in this sense. Hannibal may believe he had complete control over everything, but Will refused to give in without a fight, they would play on even ground. He chose the wrong person to play obedient lover if that's what he wanted.

Taking the seat opposite, Will sat down deliberately, gauging Hannibal's reactions carefully. The man was often so inscrutable, but he had learnt to read the knots in his forehead and the minuet ticks that creased the lines by his eyes. That strong jaw clenched, his eyes narrowing as he took the chair himself and crossed his legs, seemingly composed, even unbothered to all who could not detect the tension in the straight sophisticated line of his shoulders. His jacket was unbuttoned, hands clasped around his kneecap, and Will watched in silence as the muscles around his mouth twitch in what he could only determine was irritation.

"Did I offend you?" Will asked calmly, unfazed by the knowledge that he was goading a creature who had surely killed many for far milder an insult.

A tongue darted out to moist his lips, the slow drag deliberate and Will watched it closely. "It is unlike you to be discourteous Will."

He scoffed as he straightened in his chair, enjoying the chance to taunt in return. "Ah, well it's fair to say you can't predict everything."

Hannibal's eyebrow rose substantially, lips pursed into a thin line. There was silence as a waitress laid down the menus, placing a bottle of fresh water and two cups on their quaint round table, before glancing at the two of them. She didn't linger long, hurrying off when they paid her no attention, surveying each other stoically. He knew he was being uncharacteristically rude, but there was a sick humour in provoking Hannibal now as they refined their boundaries. Will was his companion in death and art, his friend who shared the

intimacy of a macabre darkness, and his lover of boundaries unknown. But it sure as hell wouldn't be under the unequal manipulation their friendship had been based on. Will's new found strength had shown him that two could play at that game. There was much to be figured out between them and despite the reason of his mind questioning his change of heart, he wanted this to be more, or at least, he was curious what it could be. He resisted chuckling - it seemed Hannibal was rubbing off on him.

Hannibal sighed, reaching forward to pour himself a cup of water, eyes never leaving Will. "On the contrary, I anticipated rebellion or withdrawal, although not during the lunch I intended to treat you with. I expected you would need to assert dominance and masculinity in one way or another, after all… that was the first time someone fucked you, no?"

The curse was unfitting on Hannibal's tongue yet strangely arousing to hear, contributing to the rush of blood that flooded his cheeks in embarrassment. Provoking a rush of memories pertaining to last night erotic events, Hannibal managed to both arouse and chastise him like a child. Hard and irritated, he narrowed his eyes. "The first time, yes. I wonder then, do you spoil me in the hopes to keep me in my place?" The emotional mood of this morning was gone as they challenged each other, the mongoose and snake circling warily.

"And what place would that be Will?" His throat bobbed as he sipped the water.

"A bitch at your feet."

Hannibal blinked, barely concealing an expression of amusement and curiosity. "I'm unfamiliar with accepting strays, that is more your area of expertise, but I had hoped to make you would feel at ease. Isn't that what one does with an animal in situation with which they are unaccustomed to?"

Arching an eyebrow, Will inclined his head in response and drank from the glass Hannibal placed in front of him, waiting for him to continue. "This is new for both of us Will, but we are not unacquainted with shifts in our relationship. After all we are still friends, although boundaries need to be reconfigured."

"Reconfigured?" He snorted over the use of such a crude, systematic word.

Hannibal licked his lips, looking into his lap, expression inscrutable and yet not unlike insecurity or was it uncertainty. "English rarely provides the right words to express my meaning, my apologies." He amended, drawing a deep breath with a hesitant smile. "I find myself unsure of how best to approach this, my…expertise fail me, as they so often do when it comes to you."

Hannibal's body language shifted, dropping from its usual composure into something softer, more vulnerable and it was certainly alluring. It wasn't obvious enough to be false, there was definitely a mark of truth, but it was a lure for Will all the same. Perhaps he was showing him that two could play at fishing as well? Then again maybe he was trying to be honest enough. Since his release from hospital, Hannibal had been as accommodating of the truth as possible, acquiescing for the most part to Will's demands of no more lies. He may be trying to draw him back in, to placate him, but Will hadn't really expected Hannibal to stop

manipulating him. After all, his ability to mould people's perceptions, particularly of himself was what had kept him alive and free for so long.

Watching Will cautiously, Hannibal was seemingly unaware as his stitching widened enough to reveal a glimpse of what lay beneath. Within, Will saw a unique creature in a tragic world of beauty who defied human order, striking at all that was lacklustre. Revelling in the control of precious life, he was unforgivingly brutal and urbanely practical in his removal of the ugliness that offended him so, taking and consuming that with which he did not believe pigs deserved. Yet despite this, Hannibal seemed to honestly care for Will with destruction and obsession, but also with an oddly human concoction of emotions. He was not a classic psychopath but a well-behaved predator complete with a warped sense of compassion and tenderness. Will shook his head in wonderment and chuckled lightly, surprising Hannibal. For a man who was in such control of himself and his world, Will found it was a beautiful irony that he probably didn't even recognise the extent of his own humanness. Chilton was right; indeed there was not a name for what Hannibal Lecter was.

Brows creasing slightly Hannibal closed the space in the stitching and straightened up returning to his usual quiet equanimity. "This was supposed to be a stable environment where we could discuss the changes to our friendship."

"Didn't want me to feel corner Doctor?" He was calmer than he was before, in fact he was a little endeared by the realisation that Hannibal was in denial over the emotional grip their relationship had over him. The glimpse through the cracks had affirmed the honest existence of Hannibal's romantic feelings, knowledge that offered Will a fragment of power over the man. Within he had also found a comforting revelation, something that perhaps Hannibal hadn't wanted Will to see; the enigma of this fallen angel was that he didn't entirely know who he was either. A creature of intellectual impulse, Hannibal knew he was not like others, just like Will. Perhaps that was the source of his fleeting whims and curiosity, as he lavished in the incomprehensible beauty of darkness. The absence of knowing who he was gave him the freedom and abandon to do what he willed and that had suited him fine; up till now. Now, Will was changing him, providing a unique chance to be with someone just like him, opening him up to a hope he didn't know he had. Will swallowed hard and pulled himself from away the overwhelming loneliness, trying to fight the growing urge to fall utterly to this beautiful incomprehensibly complex man. As such he was both fascinated and disturbed by just how right Hannibal was; they were alike.

And that was not something Hannibal was prepared to let go of, a shared sentiment it would seem.

Sanguine eyes watched him intently, comfortable in the stretching silence as Will drifted away in empathetic transition. There was a small smile gracing his lips, after all, it was a process he had witnessed many times before. When Will returned his gaze, Hannibal tilted his head. "No one could possibly corner you now Will. I simply want to ensure you do not feel alone, and perhaps selfishly, I want to prove your worth to me."

They watched each other calmly as the chatter of the world flew by, fading into meaningless noise. Mouth curling into a shrug, Will nodded, signifying the end of their little

banter. Picking up the menu, he flicked through the pages, fully aware of Hannibal's unwavering gaze on him. "Do you have any recommendations then?"

This seemed to satisfy Hannibal, his smile brilliant and wide, transforming his face in a way he'd never seen. He looked happy and…a little bit besotted. Is that what Will did to him, or was this another lure? At least he had ascertained that these feelings between them were true, but Will still could not conceive whether he should follow them in truth or manipulate them for Jack's gain. It certainly wouldn't be for his own gain, not anymore.

"The Rainbow trout in buerre noisette is exquisite." Hannibal elegantly shifted his chair closer and Will was touched if not slightly flustered by the realisation that this was what usually constituted as a date.

He and Hannibal were starting an affair. *Wow*...

Making their decisions, Hannibal ushered over the waitress and they sent her off with their orders. As they waited Will closed his eyes, overcome with the sounds of mundane life, how long had it been since he had experience something this normal? However were it not for Hannibal, their conflict and his electric gaze, the serenity of this place would be staggeringly boring. He sighed, through stress and abuse he had become conditioned to a harsh, fast paced life, especially since meeting Hannibal. Shifting in his seat Will felt a twinge in his backside and couldn't hide the flinch from Hannibal's perceptive eye.

"Are you comfortable?" He asked, seemingly harmless but Will knew better.

Saying nothing he looked at him incredulously and Hannibal seemed amused as he sipped his water. "I tried to be gentle."

Will recalled the precision with which Hannibal opened him up, reaching for every sensitive spot only to enter him mercilessly, fucking him deeply. The hard bench, the rough hand in his curls, the *tie.* "Not really." Will drawled.

The corner of Lecter's lips rose into a crooked smile, eyes full of a smug delight. "Perhaps. Your eagerness left me a little impatient; I'm afraid you ignite a rather savage need to ensure you'll always *feel* me." That smile turned into a charming grin as the waitress brought them their meals, cheeks flushed by the snippets of their conversation she had overheard.

"You didn't use protection…" The detail came upon him with a sudden realisation and he frowned, concerned that he hadn't remembered it earlier or objected last night.

Hannibal shrugged in a detestably aloof way that annoyed him. "I acquired all your recent health checks and am fully aware of my own." The timbre of his voice was clinical, almost bored as he said this before a devilish glint caught in his eye and he shrugged. "There was no risk fucking you bare, besides I find condoms distastefully restrictive on pleasure." The words were yet again filthy as they left his mouth yet delivered not unlike the poetic analogies he was so fond of.

He wanted to bite the calm smugness off his face, but Hannibal had claimed the upper hand of this conversation, fighting any longer would be futile. He was however curious of the doctor's perspective on their current situation. Taking a few bites of the divinely seared fish, he paused to contemplate his lover. "What are we doing Hannibal?"

The smile fell from where is reached those sanguine eyes as he put his fork down and silently assessed Will. Considering Hannibal was highly versed in body language, Will was curious to know what he saw while he watched him contemplatively. Did he see the indecision, the conflicting emotions hiding beneath his eyes? Growing within him was something deep and profound for the enigmatic man across from him, but he was still a destructive force that had to be stopped. But Will was no longer sure whether he wanted to be the one to catch him. His feelings held too much sway over him veiling his focus. Hannibal had taken so much from so many, and Will would never forget what he had taken from him. But maybe he could forgive him and that disturbed him beyond belief.

His offer of companionship appealed to even the deepest recesses of his existence, for it was a chance unlike anything else and he wasn't sure he had the will power to throw it away. He wouldn't be able to stop Hannibal from killing, so if he chose to join him, he would be committing himself to the life of and with a killer. That thought was not exactly dissuading though, for it would seem his darkness had a wicked appetite, groomed to match Hannibal's macabre and theatrical kabuki. Even though he was resigned to enjoying killing that didn't mean he had to satiate it, he could pull himself away from it should he choose to hunt Hannibal. Or he could be cherished and accepted by a lover with a filthy habit. He bit his lip and dropped his gaze, he was so damn confused – what had happened to the ethical person he used to be? He never would have contemplated something so morally wrong.

He was devoured.

He shivered. Yes, he was devoured by them both, a feast for the darkness within and Hannibal's infernal lust. Slowly but surely his innocence and morality had being eradicated with each bite, replaced with confidence, control and the chance to the feel truly alive. He was evolving into a predator – and it was exhilarating. But he couldn't deny the pit of self-loathing within him for wanted everything that Hannibal was offering. Joining Hannibal would mark the end of this life for him. They wouldn't be able to dance under Jack's nose anymore; he would have to leave Baltimore behind, perhaps even America. He frowned. Had Hannibal even thought that far, did he see what he was asking Will to give up?

Did he even care as long as he got what he wanted?

Sipping his coffee, Hannibal reclined in his chair with an air of nonchalance before shrugging with the downward curve of his mouth. "We're doing whatever we want, whatever feels natural."

"No Doctor Lecter, you're doing whatever you want. I'm just along for the ride." He scowled down at his meal, suddenly not very hungry. "None of this is natural."

"Hannibal please." He chided, cocking his head. "Last night you acted with the first natural instinct I have had the pleasure of seeing from you. If that is not true want, then we have been most assuredly mislead as God's children."

Will snorted. “God’s children. Do you know what god says of sodomy and homosexuals?”

“Are you uncomfortable with homosexuality Will?” He returned to eating as though their conversation was of the weather and not the fact that they had quite ardently fucked last night.

He had always considered himself heterosexual, in fact that didn’t feel like it had changed and yet he still desired Hannibal, still felt lust and not disgust at the thought of him deep inside him. “I’m not gay…I…I don’t know what I am.”

Hannibal languidly licked his lips. “Neither am I, not in the restrictiveness of the word. I find pleasure in all life has to offer, indulging in my wants and instincts. I have no need for the boxes man has placed on sexual behaviour, or many other boxes I might add.”

The way he stated this gave Will the distinct impression he considered himself separate from ‘man.’ How decadently arrogant, so self-assured, so powerful and yet - so enthralling. He gritted his teeth. “Instinct left uncontrolled is not necessarily a good thing, nor is sleeping with your patient might *I* add.”

Hannibal grinned like a Cheshire cat. “Perhaps, but we both know I’m fond of the unorthodox my dear Will.”

“Hannibal?”

Will froze and stared wide-eyed at Hannibal as Alana Bloom made her way over to their table. With a quick wave, Hannibal acknowledged her but returned to focus intently on Will, assessing his reaction. In truth Will had forgotten about Alana despite how she had been one of the driving reasons behind his immersion in Lecter’s infernal clutches. Seeing her now however, he felt a sense of self-loathing overwhelm him for his betrayal. He had intended to undermine her necessity in Hannibal’s life so he would cast her aside in favour of Will, but it had gone beyond his control - he was now the other lover. They had barely spoken over the past few months and Will had resigned himself to the loss of a friend, a woman he had admired and loved quiet dearly. But with her standing here before him, unaware of the deceit he had committed he felt as though he was going to be sick. Swallowing hard he looked into the depths of his murky coffee, trying to gather himself again. He was no longer the unstable, vulnerable creature she had known him to be, even if that man rested somewhere beneath the surface. For both their benefit he needed to be in control and separate himself from the anxiety of his treachery in order to salvage the situation. He still had to make sure Hannibal separated himself from Alana.

But his reasons were perhaps not as gallant as they once had been.

Looking up, Will felt a cold rage as he found Alana’s lips pressed to Hannibal’s broad cheek. The man himself leaned into the kiss, those curious eyes unwavering as they watched him in return. He swallowed his tongue, refusing to let Hannibal pull a rise from him. Quick words of formality and she would be gone and *then* he would have some very short words to say to the doctor. There was no foreseeable reason for Hannibal to continue seeing Alana, not

if his feelings for Will were as genuine as he had made then out to be. However when Hannibal invited her to join him, Will was thankful the table covered his clenched fists.

"Thank you, I'll just go grab a coffee." Will looked up to see Alana smile bequeathing at Hannibal before her eyes flickered nervously over the space that was around him as she wandered inside.

His chest tightened and he fixed Hannibal with a glare, feeling a cold contempt for the man as he pleasantly sipped his coffee. "Not really the planned meal for two?" He sneered.

The tip of Hannibal's tongue darted out to lick a stray droplet of coffee, expression innocent, but Will saw the manipulative amusement in depths of his eyes. In this moment, with such wickedness in his gaze, their colour was sinfully like the colour of blood darkened slightly by time. "It would be very rude of me not to invite Alana, after all, she is my lover."

Will couldn't control the low growl that rumbled in his chest and despite his feelings for the man he felt an uncontrollable itch goading him to kill Hannibal right now and tear away that look of fierce delight. The feelings of an empathy were a fickle thing; he could want the man and in the same instance want to tear him apart for his mind game bullshit. There was a chance Hannibal was trying to incite a jealous reaction from Will, or just testing the boundaries, but most likely, he was simply curious to see how Will would react. However, he was unaware of the danger this play held for them and Will's current mental instability. He had gone from wanting the man behind bars to considering betraying all he knew just to be with him in the short span of one morning. Powerless to stop, even Will knew that these fickle changes were the signs of instability, and manipulative abuse. Glaring at his abuser his lip curled.

Hannibal could not just wind him up and watch him go without consequences, not anymore.

"Then do you intend to continue your relationship with Alana, despite—?" He couldn't even say it as he tried to control his breathing, waiting for Hannibal to release him from this cruel game. His mind turned upon itself for allowing him to think that they could be something, especially something that was worth more than all he'd sacrificed, all Hannibal had consumed from the world.

Hannibal's mouth curled down in a shrug, his expression perfectly apathetic. "It enables me to maintain the necessary appearances."

Pursing his lips, Will clasped his hands together just to stop them from shaking. How dare he. Hannibal would play lover with him as long as it served his purpose, as long as it prevented Will from completing his trap and in the meantime he would keep Alana too. A piece in his game of chess with the FBI – no, with the world. He felt as though he was losing his mind all over again. Everything that Hannibal had shown him, all his emotions, were they simply well played lies, or did he just not care enough about them to warrant sacrificing just a little for Will? He had been willing to sacrifice everything, the redemption for the lives Hannibal stole, the cruel tricks he'd played on him and all that was good and moral within him. He'd been willing to give it all up for the mere chance to be loved by someone who truly understood him and wanted him all the same.

It sounded so pathetic now.

He had never been an aggressive person, preferring to take the submissive role lest the conflict lead him to snap, but that restraint was gone and anger boiled through him. “Toys for your collection.” He seethed, running a hand of his face trying to hold back the agony that threatened to break free.

Hannibal frowned, looking genuinely confused and Will wanted to hit him. Not a lover’s slap either. He wanted to break his face like he’d visualised when he killed Randall Tier and bloody that perplexed face, ruining the handsome features that had lead him astray.

His laugh sound foreign to him, even a little unhinged. “You’ve got Alana and I as your lovers to use when you want us for cover or *entertainment*.” The stress caught in his throat and across the table Hannibal looked as though he’d swallowed something unpleasant. “Randall and I, Margot too, you just wind us up and watch us go. I’m just a piece to your collection. A toy in your game of god.” He snarled. He was furious, furious that he thought Hannibal would ever see him as more. In one fatal blow he had managed to strip Will of the acceptance he thought he’d finally found – treating him like everyone else in his life, a tool, an object to be used and then cast aside alone and unwanted.

“Will please—.”

Hannibal actually looked upset, distressed even but Will was well past caring. He stood up and glared at the man, body shaking in anger. In any other circumstances he was sure Hannibal would have been proud of the murderous intent coursing through his body, rolling off him in waves.

“You talk of my worth but you really don’t care. I thought I saw into you and for the first time found a likeness that wanted me. Jesus, how *delusional* have you made me? You ripped apart everything I knew when I was your friend; you’d tear me to pieces if I played this game of lover with you.” He gasped, surprised by just how betrayed he felt. He had wanted this, truly wanted this and Hannibal had let him think he could with but a few sweet nothings. He walked around the table, closer to Hannibal to stare down at the man who was breaking his heart.

“I knew you were trying to change me, I thought you were offering me a place in your world, but I am nothing, just one amongst your many others to be observed by your *superior* eyes.” He spat. “No. Perhaps I am a fat pig amongst the offal of the world, but I’m not your friend—.” His rant was cut short as Hannibal launched to his feet and grabbed his hand, pulling him into a kiss. His lips were bruised by the fierce, almost violent way Hannibal ravaged him, overbearingly desperate, as though he was trying to draw him inside himself. Gripping his waist Hannibal swallowed the rush of air as it was pushed from Will’s lungs by the punishing embrace.

Cupping his face, Hannibal wildly searched his eyes. “Will, you are everything.”

He flexed his hands, feeling his rage dull under the waves of Hannibal’s emotions, the sincerity and desperation of his words. Closing his eyes, he shook his head gently. He wanted

to believe him - perhaps he would have had the kiss lasted long enough for Alana to return and see them. But Hannibal just wasn't willing to sacrifice anything for Will.

"Then prove it."

Leaving the diner and their sham of a 'date' behind, he allowed the cold chill to burn the moisture from his eyes.

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With time to think it over, Will realised Hannibal's reservation about sacrifice probably stemmed from his knowledge of the trap and by extension his concerns that Will would exploit and betray him. Which Will couldn't honestly say otherwise and perhaps it was hypocritical to have reacted the way he did, but honestly Hannibal had turned his world upside down. Considering the little he had given him in return for all he had stolen, Hannibal deserved the resent Will harboured.

As such, Will's conversation with Freddie Lounds, as distasteful as her company always was reminded him of one thing. He would never forgive Hannibal for taking Abigail away from him. This reaffirmed its weight on his conscience as he berated himself for the weakness of his resolve. How easily he had let it go, justifying it all for the chance to be with that manipulative fiend. From all this he would take away a valuable lesson. He could never again trust his feelings when it came to Hannibal. No matter what he thought, he would never have as much power over himself as Hannibal Lecter. The man was a virus, spreading his poison throughout him, teasing him with thoughts of submission, the release he would gain if he just let it all go and fell to him. Every waking moment he struggled to separate himself from this other life he had forged for Hannibal's pleasure. But he swore not to question his role in this again. He *would* catch Hannibal, his life be damned, he would bring him down even if it killed him.

Being drawn in so deeply by his desire had at least shown him it was a madness shared by two, both he and Hannibal equally affected by this warped love. Taking the time to think about it, Hannibal was certainly a puzzle more confusing than Garrett Jacob Hobbs, the compassionate psychopath. He possessed a twisted sense of compassion and tenderness, and vulnerability in his loneliness and need for another. It was clear to him now what Hannibal wanted from him. He saw beauty in the threshold between life and death, and Will would give him that. He would offer him escape from the banal, just as he offered it to him. But he refused to let his feelings for the man interfere with the plan again. The best play Will had now was to feign forgiveness and love to entice the devil to step closer to his own destruction. And hopefully he wouldn't forget this was a part he was playing, *again*.

Despite his newly affirmed resolve, Will kept his distance from Hannibal that week. He wasn't foolish enough to believe himself invulnerable to his feelings for the man, but with time he would be able to separate and compartmentalise his own need. More so the distance felt distastefully like he was licking his wounds, attempting to mend the lingering damage.

And though it got easier as the week went by, it proved impossible to shake off that deep seated need to *see* Hannibal. Like he was a junkie itching for a fix or more accurately, a victim craving the abuse of their abuser. Their own personalised and twisted form of Stockholm syndrome.

It was a welcomed distraction when Margot Verger turned up on his doorstep as she had recently taken to doing. It didn't last however as she soon began to speak of her abusive brother and her recent session with Hannibal. Much to Will's chagrin, hearing Lecter's words fall from Margot's mouth calmed him as though the man was by his side, lips pressed to his ear. Margot was a curious thing, an aimless friendship - no alliance - he had stumbled upon, her experiences with Hannibal providing Will invaluable insight into the man's method of coercion. As their drinks multiplied, Will realised that Margot had an ulterior motive, something else in play that Will couldn't see. Exposing themselves, they bared their scars and he felt a pale rage over the harm done to this strikingly resilient woman. Her tragedy had a name too, Mason Verger, more of a life's curse than the seductive poison that was Hannibal Lecter.

"Doctor Lecter was right." She sighed and his fingers skittered over her skin as he was suddenly reminded of the scars that marred Hannibal's broad back. "'In love, you take leave of your senses, but in hatred, you must be present to calculate your actions.' Despite everything he's done, I love Mason just enough not to hate him completely – that's why I failed to kill him, why I always will."

Will pulled back from her then so she would feel his shaking fingers. Hannibal couldn't have *possibly* known that she would tell him this, yet it felt as though these words were for him. The words bared the truth of his indecision like a bitter slap to the face. Despite the revengeful passion of his fantasies, with every attempt to kill Hannibal he had always distanced himself, hiding in some way or another from the act and failing every time. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't truly hate Hannibal because he loved him. Lost in the clutter of emotional confliction Margot's kiss was gentle and welcoming. He returned it fervently, allowing her to pushing him into the sheets, fully on board with losing his thoughts of Hannibal in carnal pleasure. It was unassuming and mindless, each of them with their own reasons to fuck each other senselessly. In truth Will hoped to replace the memory of calloused fingers and powerful arms that consumed his morning dreams leaving him aching and hard.

Twisting within the sheets, Margot was a responsive lover considering his wrong proclivities, but she could sense his distance. Guilty he dragged himself from the memory of light stubble grazing against his lips and focussed on her perfume filling his nose. Trailing his hands over the soft pillowy curves of her body, he looked up to find Alana in her place. Seeing her had him pause as the nostalgia of his feelings for her overcame him. Will's attachments were few throughout his life, but he had learned that they all had an expiry date, no one ever stayed with him forever. Alana reaffirmed that when she had so easily chosen Hannibal. Nevertheless despite his jealousy, he was protective over her. On the other hand, it seemed that his connection with Lecter would be a bond that clung to him forever regardless of what lay in the future. For never had anyone impacted him in such a way as Hannibal. Arching below him Alana/Margot moaned and ran her fingers up his spine, but the hands that descend to trail down his back were rough and deft.

“Gently now Will.”

He gasped as the accented rumble resonated in his head and he could almost feel Hannibal’s breath against his neck.

“So beautiful Will.”

Even miles away Hannibal still controlled him and Will closed his eyes to lose himself to the ghostly touches that lit him on fire. He whined as hands ran down his arms, their touch to distance of a memory, lacking the strength of reality that was Hannibal’s possessive claim. His breath hitched as the phantom presence of his broad chest pressed against his back, leaving him shaking as he bore down into the now faceless woman beneath him. Around his hips the hands seemed firmer, but it was nothing compared to the vivid pressure of a hard cock teasingly rubbing against his ass. It was too much.

“Han-ngh.” He choked back the cry as he emptied himself, shuddering as he held his weight off the shaking form beneath him. The figment disappeared and he collapsed next to Margot, feeling Hannibal’s absence more keenly now than ever. As she pulled herself from the sticky sheets to dress he couldn’t help but wonder what Hannibal was doing. Was he lying with Alana right now? Was he thinking of him as well? Left alone in the silence his house he resisted the need to sob for his confounded heart. He may be able to continue with the game of fish and lure, but his heart would never be the same. There was no point denying that now.

For it belonged wholly to Hannibal Lecter.

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Chapter End Notes

I wanted to show in this chapter that though Will has gained great strength, especially to brazenly butts heads with Hannibal, the lost empathetic, eye-avoiding man he was still exists and sometimes it’s a curse. Despite the strength and resolve he has, that part of him just wants to be accepted, and is willing to be blinded to this enigmatic fiend who offers such loving acceptance.

Also if you have any questions, remarks or even just wanna say hi please feel free to drop me a question on my tumblr - Elliearna I'd love to hear from you guys <3

Dainanashō

Chapter Notes

Longest chapter yet! I get a bit caught up in the possibilities of what Hannibal does and doesn't feel and where that puts him on the scale of psychopathy as such this my interpretation. I've come across many speculations within the fandom some which match up with my idea of him, this chapter I really wanted to flesh out the complexities and even contradictions of Hannibal - most of which makes him devilishly alluring as a character and psychologically fascinating.

Probably needed more editing, but I felt guilty for taking so long, nevertheless I hope you enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Lost in the throes of sleep, Hannibal left Alana in bed, sucking his teeth at the thought of her scent stealing away the last aroma of Will from his sheets. Throughout the week he had been meticulous about where he laid at night, letting that distinct scent lull him to sleep to soothe the absence that was Will Graham. To see it fade away at the hands of Alana was yet another reminder of her intrusion on his relationship with Will. Very few things had brought Hannibal pleasure this week, even cooking had lost its usual appeal as he was haunted by Will's last words, the heart break in his expression. Hannibal was struck by an old kind of fury, and incensed anger direct solely at himself.

He rarely made mistakes he regretted, but the pain he had caused Will, the damage he had done to their relationship left him furious. He was aware that Will was sensitive despite how engrossed he was in his own corruption, still struggling to understand his emotions as he deliberated over his alignment between he and Jack. Pain and fear had always been a strong motivator for Will, but the most powerful by far was his anger. Perfectly aware of the consequences, Hannibal had previously acted with careful precision, provoking Will's anger to encourage his violent tendencies and it worked. Will had sent Matthew Brown after him and in return he alienated Will from Alana, a deliberate aggravation, and perhaps a punishment. Utilising her as an alibi was an added convenience however he couldn't deny he was attracted to her. She was the epitomised vision of what it was to be human; beautiful, intelligent, kind and so flawed. But she was nothing compared to Will Graham. He had severely miscalculated toying around at lunch, not counting on Will's belligerence and the unfortunate links he pulled into pattern from Hannibal's behaviour. Nothing he had said was

specifically incorrect, Will wasn't the first, but he was the only one to have *ever* affected Hannibal.

His hand instinctively clenched around the banister, halting his descent down the stairs. He stared at it and allowed the frustration to sweep over him, feeling almost a sense of peace as he relinquished control briefly. A fault of Will's influence, Hannibal was feeling the uncontrollable nature of emotions rebelling within his mind. Emotions were not strangers to him, he was indeed quite emotional, but he ruled over them with complete control. Empathy was in fact a gift both he and Will shared; only Hannibal wielded his as a tool. With highly skilled cognitive empathy he was able to observe and comprehend, even deconstruct, as such this allowed him to utilise, respond appropriately and even manipulate others. Affective empathy was more a mystery to him, and for his distaste of emotional chaos he had long since restrained that innate ability to feel the depths of human emotions within others, distancing himself from his own. This made him a substantially more stable empathy, unlike Will who was strongly affective, clouded and gifted by his ability to personalise himself with the multiple facets of an individual. Slowly Hannibal was training him to use his cognitive empathy, to control his gift, but he too was not unaffected. Will was changing him. Inside his emotions struggled to run rampant without reason or discernable origin and it was *concerning* to say the least.

Despite his feelings for Will, he was disconcerted, yet fascinated by the man's ability to override his carefully placed walls of control, leading him to exhibit such unusual behaviour. He knew he had come on too strong for Will to handle when they awoke that morning. He was so easily lost in the euphoria of Will, his Ganymede so beautifully marked with his claim. That night as they lay in bed, he had concocted a plan to adjust Will gently, subtly, guiding him to reason away their carnal moment in a way his mind could believe while he dealt with the murder of Tier. He would make nothing of it, be reserved and aloof, keeping his distance and allow Will's emotions to fall deep, unknowingly taking him over. This would allow him to keep his own in check. But it had proved a surprisingly impossible task, all plans flying out the window at the sight of Will. So alert and flustered, clothed only in his underwear he had stood in his bedroom smelling like sex and Hannibal, his smooth chest littered with bruising tributes to their passion.

Mine.

Sitting down in the plush grey velvet chair in his study, he closed his eyes, gazing upon the vivid image that rested amongst the many of Will Graham in his mind. He could easily draw Will from the countless hours he had spent just watching and admiring, every inch of him seared into his mind. Those features were as familiar to him as though it was Will he saw when he looked into the mirror. It was near obsessive the detail in which he could picture those dark tousled curls so often dripping with fevered sweat and long fanning eyelashes that flutter over eyes roving madly beneath, squeezed shut as if to hold back the horror that played within his mind. A likeness to the imagined face of Ganymede, the scruff of facial hair shaped his fine jaw line, strengthening it, bringing a wild hauntedness to the lean gentle composition of his face.

Throughout his life Hannibal Lecter had witnessed beauty and ugliness in all its forms. The world was comprised of a sensuality and sexuality that he took great pleasure wading

through, eliminating the discourteous ugliness to surround himself with art of every form. He had thought he'd seen it all – till he'd looked deep into Will's startled eyes and saw the reflection of violence and passion hidden within a compassionate wrapping. Never had he dreamt of finding someone who could comprehend him, someone who felt pleasure in destruction yet was functionally consumed by it, his perfect match. Anyone who would happen upon his sketch book would likely think him mad with obsession as they saw the countless pages of the emotions he found in those blue depths. It had taken so long for Will to trust him enough to hold his gaze, to stare into his eyes and allow him to look back. And what he saw there was shatteringly beautiful in its potential for all Hannibal had to offer. At the possibility of such perfect unity Hannibal had thrown his usual withdrawn caution to the wind, falling truly enamoured with Will.

Throwing back his glass of whiskey without reservation he hissed at the sting that burned within him. The warmth soothed the empty ache in his body and he tilted his head back to lean against the velvet, walking through the memory of that wondrous morning when he had woken with Will's warm body in his arms. Angered to have been so rudely disturbed from their post-coital sleep, he had considered throwing his phone out the window when Jack called. Tension struck the soft form beneath him and Will had withdrawn quickly, chinned raised in defiance, seemingly in control, but there was a fear to his eyes akin to that of a startled animal. He knew what he'd done, and what he'd enjoyed, pertaining to both Tier's murder and sleeping with Hannibal.

Despite being hurt initially by Will's closure, Hannibal enjoyed advancing upon him, catching him off guard with his uncharacteristic exude of emotion. It left him giddy with affection, but notably uncontrolled as he traversed through unknown territory. Will seemed to afflict him with a peculiar silliness; he was more theatrical with a greater need to perform - to entice Will closer perhaps, but this need made him more unreasonable. He took particular offence from those who were close to Will, reacting more unreasonable – jealous, Will would probably argue. However he didn't care, he had forsaken reaching out for too long, and he refused to let this chance go, he *refused* to let Will go. Even if he had driven Will away, he would never escape him alive.

He flexed his hand around the glass and took a deep breath, reining back his obsession, steering away from the impractical path of devastation his mind was thinking up.

The distance between them this past week had put Hannibal in a foul mood and he contemplated sending him another body to entice him back – after all it had worked quite well the first time. He would have sent him Alana if he didn't know such a move would bring Jack Crawford's wrath down on him, perhaps Will's too. He had learnt that Alana was a particularly fascinating power play between them. Will was both jealous of her and determined to get her out of harm's way, which included Will's violent tendencies. He was also still a little in love with her which in turn filled Hannibal with a thick jealousy. A cold, coiled thing that sat in his stomach, it had placed Alana in a perilous situation on more than one occasion jealousy purring at Hannibal to remove her from Will's side permanently. Sometimes he was surprised by how she trustingly allowed him to grasp her throat, unaware of how he imagined applying enough pressure to watch the life leave those intelligent eyes.

However to act on such an action would likely return Will to the hunt – but then how best to proceed? To simply leave Alana without reason would deny him appearance and likely rouse her suspicions, yet to kill her, which was certainly simpler, would only focus Jack's attention on him. Hannibal filtered between thoughts of affection and apathy with Alana recently, finding irritation in her fawning yet was unable to deny that she mattered to him. He had worked hard to blind her and yet that she was unable to *see* him despite her intellect filled him with disappointment. When he lay with her, running his fingers through her hair he envisioned short curled locks and sharp hips as he thrust between her warm thighs. It was the only way he could match the usual passion of their sex life as his interest in her waned and his lust for Will grew.

His lip curled in frustration as he poured another glass. If he went without Will for much longer, he may do something regrettably drastic. Currently all he could do was wait and see whether he would attend dinner with he and Alana tomorrow night. It wouldn't be the first time Will had punished Hannibal with his absence. Ignoring the invitation would be perilous on his behalf, for though Hannibal was a patient man, he was unaccustomed to having his things taken away from him. Will would do well to remember what he had done to that detestable judge who had saw fit to keep them apart.

Surrounded by silence in his study, Hannibal tried to get comfortable, but his mind was playing a fickle game with him tonight. He resented being forced to make any kind of decision that was not carefully planned - but he would not risk losing Will. He could compromise for the man, most certainly, but it was a foreign concept. Throughout his life he had bent to the whims of others for his own purpose and perhaps to challenge himself with social constraints, playing normal in the game of interaction. But now he wanted to do something *for* Will alone, to prove that he wanted what was best for him. Eventually Will would see that Hannibal was the best thing that had ever happened to him. As his perfect match within this world of art and pigs, Hannibal was desperate not to lose him.

He glared down at the brown liquid in his glass. Since when was he so banal to feel desperation? Meeting Will had unpredictably thrown his mind awry, more so as the man began his beautiful transformation shifting the balance of their relationship. As he had anticipated, Will was struggling to define the line between his rising darkness and his lure for the FBI. But the sex was unexpected for both of them and Hannibal had, unfortunately failed to hold a plan in place as his desires led him with abandon. Grazing his knuckles against his teeth he drained the last of his whiskey before rising from his study chair. His place of comfort was severely lacking tonight and he had to supress the voice that called at him to leave his home and drive to Wolf's Trap. If he did that, he would most likely push Will, make promises he could not keep just to be able to hold him and claim that angular body. In anticipation the memory of Will's scent filled his nose. Notes of silt and engine oil lingered around his poorly chosen aftershave, hiding the heated aroma of animal fur, ground stone, hot blood and sweat. Oh how he longed to taste him. He groaned and set his glass down hard in the desk, leaving a circular dint in the wood.

He glared at it with gritted teeth before running his hands through his hair. He felt so out of place. Surveying his study he shuddered at the ostentatious display of intellect, prestige and taste. A vulgarity he punished so many for, he felt no guilt over the hypocrisy, but there was a shallowness to it that no longer gave him pleasure. He would trade his world of fine

arts and luxury for the simple life Will preferred as long as he had his walking piece of art beside him.

But first he had to win their game.

Pouring himself another glass of whiskey from the decanter, he took a sip from the dark liquid. It was a tad weak by his standards, but as Will's staple brand drinking it felt intimate. Mulling over his thoughts he left the study and wandered to the harpsichord. Dancing lightly over the keys, he was disappointed by the predictability of its sound, bored to play in familiar territory, unlike the Theremin. Hannibal had always felt that the Theremin was symbolic of his relationship with Will, in fact it could be more accurately said that Will was his Theremin. Despite all the wayward emotions he was experiencing, there was something thrilling to the freedom and abandon with which he could compose Will unwittingly. He was an instrument so uniquely different, unheard under the sounds of the world, but Hannibal was crafting him into a song to be played by his expert fingers.

And his alone.

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Hannibal was pleasantly surprised to find Will at his door at 7:30 sharp, dressed simply in clothes that smelt freshly pressed under the pungent aftershave Hannibal was now oddly attached to. Straight and confident, this calm image was betrayed when Will broke eye contact first, but not before Hannibal saw the relieved warmth in those blue depths.

He had missed him too, even if he wouldn't admit it.

Passing him a rather expensive bottle of wine, Will smirked. "I've yet to know what sort of meat I should bring to your table, so this will have to do."

It was a risky remark and yet, Hannibal took it like a breath of fresh air, smiling fondly back. "Of course, please come in Will."

Leading him to the dining room, he noted Alana was focused intently on their closeness. She frowned at the way Hannibal leaned into Will's space, guiding him around the table with a hand on his lower back. Since she had arrived it seemed as though something was weighing on her mind, yet she was unwilling to give it words lest it be true. This should have concerned him, but he was far too elated that Will had joined them for tonight. He would tend to her concerns later, perhaps though, his ignorance and lack of concern for her qualms would help him to better lay the roots of his plan.

Pulling out a chair for Will, he intentionally waited for the man to sit before pushing him closer to the table, resting his hands on his shoulders intimately. Feeling Will's warmth with his fingers he drew energy from the contact and beneath his weight, Will relaxed into the chair. Something mutual and unspoken past between them, but it was not unnoticed by Alana who took an alarmingly large sip of wine.

“Just a moment.” Smiling widely, he squeezed Will’s shoulders gently, before leaving them to survey each other in silence as he returned to the kitchen.

Finishing up his preparation of the boar gifted to him by Mason he pondered over the possibility of convincing Will to kill the man. It would of course disrupt Margot’s plan if she had yet to find a suitor to impregnate her, but his curiosity in her ability was minimal in the face of Will’s transformation. Granted, the prospect of Will had far surpassed curiosity; he was no longer simply a piece in his ‘game of god’ as Will had put it. He had taken new form, shaped by the intrinsic allure, challenge and chance of friendship he presented to Hannibal. Perhaps, if Will believed Hannibal thought himself a God, then Will was surely his Adam, but truly Hannibal believed their world was forsaken by any deity.

The world was a child, blearily eyed as it awoke from sleep, waiting for a creator, ignorant to the tragedy that was the human condition. Insignificance was unavoidable, and yet humans grasped at the possibility that something greater could give them meaning; futile and pathetic, they did not see that the world was theirs for the taking. Life and death; that was all humans had to look forward to. But Hannibal found death comforting; its impending nature offered him a freedom to appreciate everything; beauty, art and horror. His own insignificance was not damning, but enlightening to his sense of self. He observed the world and its offerings taking power and control from death he chose his victims’ time to die, playing ‘god’ per say. Life was precious, no one was insignificant in meaning, but many were useless in existence. Free of their offence Hannibal evolved such useless pieces into art, consuming that with which they did not deserve. No, no gods ruled over this world. It was free to be shaped as one wished, and Hannibal wished for so much, filled with many ‘*sins’* his avarice knew no bounds.

And now he wished for Will.

He was a companion worthy of his trust and affection, a friend and lover to surpass all who had ever tried to know him. Will had reached through his walls to caress the lonely being lying within, leaving him to be governed by the selfishness of his emotions that craved that warm perfect touch.

It was new and beautiful, and he wanted it all no matter the cost.

Carefully arranging the pig, he surrounded it with fruits of new harvest, placing grapes and split fruit amongst the caramelised vegetables. Satisfied, he wheeled the boar out of the kitchen and into the dining room, smiling at the silence of the room. Looking up he saw Will and Alana regarding each other with cold calculation. Alana may be blind to him, but she was quite aware of Will’s evolution, a fault of his early uncalculated actions against Hannibal. This would have been something well within Hannibal’s expertise to combat, except Will had remained rather petulant towards her, hurt by her betrayal. As such there was an oppressive atmosphere whenever they were in a room together, particularly because Alana was endearingly protective of Hannibal.

This precious and strong quality of Alana’s character was one of the many that had attracted him to her in the first place. It left him conflicted over his intention to hurt her - and if necessary kill her. She was more than just an asset, she truly was his friend mattering a great deal, but she did not take precedence over Will and he would remove her. However he

intended to do it slowly lest he arouse her suspicions of his 'hobbies,' the detachment from him had to be approached in a specific way, eased away with time and specific form of mistrust. Alana already suspected Hannibal's obsession with Will, but she only feared what Will could do to him, he needed to expose what she was denying to herself – the nature of what Hannibal wanted from his relationship with Will. Removing her blind entirely would not serve his purpose, but he could expose a layer and reveal the romantic nature of his inclination towards Will.

If he did it right, she would be easy to predict even away from his side, enabling him to manoeuvre her into place before the closure of his game with the FBI. Though, whilst he intended to enlighten her of his indiscretions with Will civilly, the unreasonable creature inside longed to have her lay witness to their desire for each other. Naturally curious over what she would do with the knowledge, he also craved another's acknowledgment of his claim on Will. After all she had once loved him too, but he would see him die before he saw Will with another.

As he served dinner, Alana gave words to the thoughts he had seen her ponder over all night, thoughts that had apparently come from Freddie Lounds. Another pest he had been waiting to remove it seemed the red head reporter was long overdue for a visit to his table. Curious for Will's reaction, Hannibal said little to dissuaded Alana's concerns, feeling a swell of affection as Will took the chance to engage her inquiries on the nature of their relationship. His words were short, almost mocking and Hannibal felt a predatory grin push for release as he admired the derisive serenity on his beloved's face. Alana's eyes flickered between them, upset at Hannibal's lack of objection when he responded affably, giving support to Will's words. And the evening only improved, Hannibal taking great delight in the acerbic tone Will used when speaking to Alana, nonchalant and yet protective of their bond when she brought their boundaries into question. It amused Hannibal, threading a warmth throughout his body. He too was protective of what was his, violently if it was necessary and, so it seemed was Will.

Will levelled Alana with an alarmingly cold look, seeming to regard her remarks, much like Hannibal, as invading and tasteless. Despite how she brazenly pulled his relationship with Will into question, she dropped her gaze, perhaps frightened by the unrecognisable person she saw there in his gaze. But Hannibal knew him; within those eyes he saw an exciting desire for violence – in this very moment Will was contemplating what it would be like to kill Alana. He saw it in the way Will's forefinger caressed the silver knife in his hand, the deliberate, slow way he chewed, eyes never leaving her. It sent such a rushing thrill through him that he almost asked him to do it.

But he couldn't, because Will still was not completely his.

He had done irreparable damage when he had nothing to combat Will's accusations, nothing to counteract the evidence of all his past actions – he still had nothing but the truth of his feelings. Will was slowly but surely unravelling his understanding of himself, opening him up to parts he thought sealed forever. Honestly, Hannibal felt as though he was falling in love. Not unaware of his alignment to the likes of psychopaths and narcissists, the prospect of 'love' was a likely impossibility, but that didn't change the fact that this was the closest he had come to the emotion. What he felt for Will transcended such common emotions, truly

enamoured he was adoring in the regality of Will's intelligence and mental capacities. He was consumed with the completed sense that he had found his perfect match; someone who understood what it was to be human, yet could recite the poem that was the art of murder and death. Most importantly, Will was someone who saw the elevation to art Hannibal brought to his victims, art they could create together.

Finishing the meal in silence, Alana's impolite cough drew Hannibal's attention to where Will was filling up his glass again, draining the last of the wine bottle. Hannibal blinked, noting that he and Alana had yet to finish their first glass. Smiling fondly at the rose flush to Will's cheeks, he was unperturbed that Will's confidence had come from the comfort and relaxation inebriation often gave him. It had been too long since he had had the pleasure of dealing with a tipsy Will. With the meal finished, Hannibal stood and ushered Alana to accompany him from the room.

"I think it would be best if we call it a night. Will is out of sorts this evening." He said calmly with just enough concern to be convincing.

Alana bit her lip looking unwilling to leave. "I think Will is still too unstable to be trusted, especially around you Hannibal."

Hannibal quickly masked his expression before it gave away any indication of irritation. "Around me or with me Alana?" He asked, careful to keep his tone neutral as he collected her coat from the hanger.

She recoiled from this, eyes hurt as it became clear he was rushing her out the door. "This relationship is destructive Hannibal, Will is dangerous."

He smiled charmingly. "Will is still very sensitive at the moment; I feel it is perhaps your presence that is unfortunately detrimental." He touched her cheek soothingly as her eyes widened in shock. "He still perceives you as a betrayer for your mistrust, recognising your continued resentment towards him for what he did to me. As such you are the embodiment of the emotions he felt when he had me attacked. It isn't personal, but I think it is best if you maintained your distance."

Sighing, she nodded slightly, seeming rather put out. "Just be careful." She swallowed deeply and allowed him to slip the coat over her shoulders. Turning around, she reached up to kiss him and he embraced her gently, returning the kiss without heat, a clear goodbye, but nonetheless affectionate. As he said, 'those who raise livestock can have genuine affection for them' and he had reared Alana Bloom in his own fashion. She had been his longest friend, one he had manipulated with careful and delicate strokes undetected despite her keen awareness of the actions of others. For this she mattered to him in her own way, but he would without pretence send her to slaughter should the need arise.

"Of course." Kissing her on the cheek he held open the door, watching until she drove away in her quiet little hybrid.

Closing the door, Hannibal grinned. With that, Alana would be wary of Will and less inclined to approach them when they were together, but it would also raise the desired doubts over their relationship. With deliberate steps Hannibal would guide her to see the truth of

their romantic relationship, at which point he would cast her away. She would maintain her ignorance of his hobbies as she focused on his crimes of adultery and breaches in professionalism.

But now, he had a slightly drunk Will all to himself.

Walking back into the dining room with a happy lightness to his pace he frowned when he realised Will was gone. Trailing about the lower level to no avail he made his way upstairs, unsure whether he was feeling irritated for Will's presumed rudeness or curious as to what game he was surely playing at. Wandering into his bedroom his eyes twitched at the sight of Will lying on his bed, shoes and all.

"It's rather rude of you to wander Will." Hannibal chastised and drew closer, his body growing warm as he recalled the last time they were in his room together. Suddenly the idea of Will, even with his shoes on his bed wasn't such a bad thing.

"You've reared me very carefully Doctor Lecter. Do you intend to send me off to slaughter or will you devour me yourself?" Will murmured softly, tone contemplative rather than concerned.

"One does not simply send a treasure such as yourself off to slaughter Will, no matter what you think of me, surely you know that." He maintained his distance, aware of the uneven ground he needed to cautiously smooth out. There was unintentional damage between them, and it was crucial that Hannibal recovered the lost trust from a strategic point of view. And… he needed Will back. He needed to fix the mistakes he'd made.

Sitting up, blue eyes regarded him callously. "Then you plan to devour me? Is that what you want with me *Doctor*?"

"Hannibal." He frowned, disliking the way Will coldly brandished his title as weapon of distance. "I want to be with you. Will, you are my friend, but you could be so much more – I'm simply following the normal whims of the heart."

"What is normal for the spider is chaos for the fly – normal is an illusion." Will whispered.

"Morticia Addams? Really Will?" Hannibal smiled fondly.

"Normal is your illusion; but you don't even know what feeling normal is like. Neither do I, but you can't convince me that it can be that simple, not anymore." He looked down at the clenched fists bearing into his thighs. "Not now that I know your pretty words of worth were false."

"I did not lie Will, you matter to me, more than you seem to realise." Will had no idea the vibrancy he had brought to Hannibal's world. He had gone so long without new stimulation but meeting Will had offered him the chance to share his life with someone who complimented him perfectly.

“But that never stopped you playing around in my head.” He shot to his feet. “You broke me to change me into this monster – but I don’t understand why?” As he staggered closer, Hannibal realised that unfortunately this Will wasn’t the fun rosy cheeked creature he had encountered before.

He frowned. Why was Will asking this of him when he already knew the answer. He saw it every time he looked in the mirror, the creature trying to get out from within, the creature that matched Hannibal’s like two sides of the same coin. He had abused Will’s mind so savagely in the hope it would open him up to see what he had been denying to himself. Alone as they were, together they could shape the world. He had broken him when he had him institutionalised, but like the shattered cup Will had collected himself into the beautiful tormented creature before him. And though he was in pain now, this was only a step in his transformation.

With bated breath Hannibal had been slowly drawing Will through his evolution waiting for the day when they would both see the world through the same eyes. And deep down Will knew this. He also knew the rules they played by, the rules that kept Hannibal’s mouth sealed to truth. Will was not a binary thinker and at any moment, despite how strong of a grip Hannibal may have on him, Will could fall to his moral code and betray him. Only when he truly offered himself up to the dark could Hannibal allow Will to truly see him. This was something Will knew all the same and yet he was punishing Hannibal so severely for the gag he had placed.

Licking his lip he watched Will in silence waiting for the man to meet his eyes, surprised when he gritted his teeth and turned away. It was rare for Will to avoid eye contact with him these days. A development of confidence or part of the mask he had forged for Hannibal, this avoidance revealed that the problem was deeper than their game, closer to his core.

“Something else is upsetting you. This will go better in you tell me what you are thinking Will.” Removing his jacket, he laid it gently over the dark upholstered chair in the corner. Turning around he found Will had moved closer and was now levelling him with a frustrated glare. Was Hannibal not emotional enough? Did Will really expected that he would be so frivolous with his emotions knowing that Will may still use them against him? Will clearly wanted to win something from him, tear it from his grip and declare some power over their relationship. But Hannibal couldn’t offer him that. It wasn’t so much that he refused to give up control, well it was, but he couldn’t risk losing Will. All Hannibal could offer him was penance for his folly. He would take his rage and pain until Will’s level head returned to him and their game could resume.

Perhaps revealing his emotions had been a poor idea. This would have gone more smoothly if he and Will had simply danced around each other with lures, goading each other, waiting to see who was caught first. Now, everything was far more complicated, and not just for Will. Hannibal was severely inconvenienced even incapacitated by the acknowledgment of his feelings.

Will ran a hand down his face, pinching the bridge of his nose. “Of course because you are allowed to know all that I’m thinking but a glimpse into your obsession with me is

completely unfathomable."

He could hear the despondent tone and smiled softly. They were both so tired, pulled this way and that by emotions that were never supposed to have been included in this game of theirs.

Unbuttoning his vest he discarded it, watching it fall over the chair apathetically. "I'm expected to inquire what you are thinking Will, I'm your psych—."

"Did you fuck her here after I left?"

That pulled him up. Alana. This was still about his relationship with Alana.

"An honest answer would only cause you pain." Hannibal said solemnly. Will wanted honesty from him, but he wouldn't like him when he was honest.

"So you did." His blue eyes were dangerous, their complex depths cutting as they accused him.

This conversation was steadily getting out of hand. Even if Hannibal were to reveal what he intended to do with Alana, he still couldn't trust Will not to use it against him. There was nothing Hannibal could give Will to make this better and it set in that cold fury within him again. Breaking eye contact Hannibal looked down at his hands and felt the near compulsive need to wash his hands, to rid himself of Alana's touch. But her scent was something Will could not see, he would not see it as an act of cleansing. Nevertheless Hannibal sighed and walked into the bathroom, rolling up his sleeves.

This was not how he pictured this evening going.

Scrubbing the aromatic perfume from his fingertips and the palm that had caressed her cheek he released a deep breath, feeling substantially more like himself. He could hear Will behind him, the vibrating staccato of his breath and looked in the mirror to see the discord in his eyes. Torn between wanting to lovingly touch and murderously maim, Will's hand was outstretched towards him. Suddenly there was fear in those blue eyes and he reeled back. Hannibal shook his head, when would Will realised he was just as lost, how long till he stopped fighting what they had.

"What do you want to do Will?" He turned around, leaning against the basin bench and watched Will flex his hands at his sides, refusing to look at him.

"I want you…and - I want to hurt you." His hands made fists as he lifted his gaze to stare at him in such tortured anguish and all Hannibal could think of was how beautiful he looked.

He nodded, appreciative of the honesty for it gave him a better angle to work from. "Understandably, I hurt you, but – ."

He didn't want to hurt Will, he truly didn't, but that didn't mean he wouldn't. He had no delusions about the limitations of empathy for another's emotions, even his beloved's,

especially when faced with his survival instincts – or the lengths he was willing to go to have Will beside him. But how did he communicate the complexities of his rational to a man who, despite all they shared, was not born from the violence that carved Hannibal from childish softness.

He had survived what was done to him, and Will would too. In time perhaps he would be able to tell Will of his past, maybe then he would see that Hannibal had shaped him with much gentler hands than the many that had 'enlightened' Hannibal to the world. Hannibal had been offered a broken path, but transcended his situation, rising a refined predator. There were many in the world who were broken, but few who could gather themselves and overcome the limitations of their circumstances. He had shattered Will, much like he too had been shattered, but he knew Will could collect himself. Then again, would he forgive him once he knew that Hannibal had, ultimately chosen this path, ignoring ample opportunity to turn away. In truth perhaps he was always a monster, even before he lost Mischa.

No, before he cost himself Mischa.

"You deserve to pay for what you've done. You deserve to be hurt." Will whispered and started moving towards him.

Oh Will had no idea.

Was he simply repeating the same mistakes? As a child he had tested the boundaries of life and death, prone to the indulgence of his every impulse, regardless of how reckless and manipulative. And despite how he had loved his sister, his sweet innocent sister he had still led her to temptation for naught but the innate curiosity he possessed. Too many mistakes, he had made far too many and it had cost him Mischa, and yet here he was doing it again with someone he 'loved' just as equally. Perhaps he deserved to be punished.

It was clear Will was going to hit him, and Hannibal realised he had a choice. If Will was going to punch him, *hurt* him he could either defend himself or allow the blow to fall. Perhaps the action would satisfy the desire that had been teasing Will with fantasy of killing Hannibal or maybe he might find the balance he was so desperately seeking. Perhaps this was what Hannibal could offer him and sated the ugly creature within grieving for the golden beauty his memories had resurrected. Terrible and deceitful Hannibal deserved Will's anger - so he closed his eyes and awaited the blow.

But it never fell, instead he was surprised by fingers grazing softly over the scar on his wrist. Hannibal pulled his arms away from his touch, reaching to pull down his sleeves to cover them but Will's hands stopped him.

His expression was perplexed, yet fascinated as his fingers caressed the ridged lines of pink knotted flesh. "Why are you're hiding them?"

"I'm hiding them because I don't want them to hurt you." He said simply and tried to move out of Will's grip.

"I don't regret them Hannibal, I feel no guilt." He said this with such unwavering confidence and yet he refused to look up, keeping a firm grip on his wrist. Did he see them as

his mark, permanently etched into Hannibal's flesh? Did that excite him?

"I regard these scars as penance for my betrayal of you and for the trespasses against you." Hannibal felt possessed by Will through the scars, but he could not deny the buried memories of pain they sometimes triggered.

Will must have noticed the slight shake in his voice because suddenly he was crowding him against the banister, hands circled around both forearms, looking down at them. "Good." He murmured, but Hannibal heard the strained confusion behind his words and smiled.

That Will was conflicted over the wounds he had inflicted on him was touching. Initially Hannibal was curious over the violence Will had displayed in order to send a killer after him, but he was also injured, although not insulted by Will's desire to kill him. Hannibal knew what he was, knew that Will had lists of reasons to do what he did to him but that was only because he had yet to see how perfect they were for each other. But what would Will think if he knew of the horrors his wounds had unleashed upon Hannibal's mind – would he care? The incident itself left only a minimal impact on him, the curiosity on the faces of others easily manageable as he had waited for the bruises about his neck to fade, but the experience had seen the return of nightmares he wished he could have run from forever.

The silence between them was oppressively long and Hannibal straightened up away from the cold basin edge. "More for my collection, but at least this one I deserved."

Will gazed back at him, unflinching, and Hannibal found he was the one who wanted to turn away, troubled by what Will may see as he gazed deep. Only Murasaki knew of the nightmares that had plagued him in his youth as she diligently treating the scars over his body with balm. She never asked where he had gotten each from, and honestly he couldn't tell her. Some were from his time wandering about the wilderness, others from the cruelty of the mistresses at the orphanage; assuredly most were from the other boys for his silence. But the deepest wounds were within and could be healed by nothing but blood.

Shaking off the murderous thoughts filling his body with heat Hannibal forced a chuckle. "I was a bit shaky with a knife afterwards, severely impeding the preparations of my meals." The allusion to his hobby should have had Will reeling away from him in anger; instead his eyes remained fixed, filmed over with a layer of unshed tears.

"I'm not sorry." He choked, shoulders shaking as he looked down again and Hannibal felt warm tears drops cooling on his skin. He didn't know what Will had seen as he looked within him but he decided not to call him out on his lie. Despite the sombre tone the night had taken Hannibal felt a weight lift off his chest. Will's tears were cathartic for them both. He knew a part of Will was capable of hating him but he didn't want to, not really, he wanted to see the good in him. He wanted to love and understand him, even if it terrified him. And that was beautiful. Slipping his hands from his grasp Hannibal guided Will to look at him so he could gaze upon the face of his beloved. Finding tears rolling freely down his cheeks in silent descent Hannibal took a shuddering breath.

In that moment Hannibal truly loved him, actually *loved* him.

Shit.

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Chapter End Notes

I don't particularly align NBC's Hannibal with the 'Hannibal Rising' book, in fact I think its more likely, considering Fuller's Hannibal is more like a Fallen Angel I feel that Mischa's death would have been Hannibal's fault.

Also - swearing Hannibal is my kink, seriously, I would include it so much more if this fic wasn't so serious

Elliearna

Daihachishō

Chapter Notes

Wow, you guys are the best, I'm so overwhelmed by the amazing response I've gotten for this story. I apologies for getting a bit slower (got myself a job and Uni started up again) but don't fear I wouldn't stop updating! Waaaayyy too invested in this fic - mostly cause you guys are so lovely.

Elliearna

I felt bit sad writing this chapter because despite the Hannigram I'm trying to keep it to the season 2 plot as much as one can with the developing romantic relationship. As such this made me sad because this is the point where I make Hannibal believe, truly believe that he has Will, that though he may not have forgiven him for everything, Will has given up on the Law and finally realises Hannibal is the only and best friend Will has, can and will ever have. Self absorbed but I love Hannibal's psychology. I don't get it as much as some people in this fandom, but I'm trying and its fascinating and heart-breaking. I have a happy ending planned eventually, but we've got some canon pain and bit of my own to get through.

Also PREWARNING of Hannibal's consideration of letting Will top and Will being a little handsie with Hanni's toosh!

Also this is for Spocktacular for their adorable comment!! So for taking so long luv!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

Hannibal Lecter could love.

Astounded by the emotions currently flooding his mind, wrapping around his walls like vines, he was mute as Will pulled away. Cocking his head, blue eyes regarded him pensively, seemingly aware that Hannibal was struck by some kind of inner turmoil. Dazed by the internal admission of his 'love' for Will, Hannibal stared unseeing with an unfortunate expression that would have horrified him if he had been able to see its vacant, poor construction.

"I have to go." Will's smile was gentle, voice clear and coherent and Hannibal realised under the fog of mental commotion that he'd been duped by his beloved. Will was not as

drunk as he had seemed, in fact he now appeared perfectly sober and calculated. All an act to get the answers he wanted it seemed. *Well played.* Hannibal noted absently, pride swimming to the surface of the chaos he was trying to order and compartmentalise.

Blinking slowly he tried to pull himself away from the noise in his head and implement structure. He refused to let Will see him unbalanced and expose this lapse in his perfect understanding of himself. Opening his mouth, he considered objecting to Will's departure, but honestly he needed isolation from him to fully process what had just passed, especially as he was struggling to form any reactive thought. He should offer to take Will home, or at very least to the door, but his mind supplied no words, unbelievably overwhelmed and yet blank. What was happening to him! Taking a deep breath he looked down at his hands, trying to guard his eyes from Will's empathy lest he see the vulnerability shaking him. Feeling a hand on his shoulder he looked up to feel the gentle press of Will's lips to his own.

The warmth those lips gave was like a balm on the fraying stitches of his mind, but it was fleeting, the cold returning before he had the chance to reciprocate. Hands weighted uselessly at his sides, he watched as Will left the room without so much as another word. Bracing his body against the bench he closed eyes and waited until the door downstairs closed with a resounding echo.

Love. He couldn't possibly be feeling the very same love that robbed people of their senses, at least not to the capacity of most humans, and yet. Grimacing, he dragged a hand over his mouth and he sighed. The surprised incessant rambling of his mind had left no place for logic and rationalisation – he needed to collect himself.

Slipping out of his shoes he took small deliberate steps towards the shower and turned on the water, gritting his teeth as he stepped under the freezing spray. The shock of the cold unfortunately do not kick start his brain, managing only to ruin his favourite shirt and fill his socks full of icy water. Tilting his head to the ceiling he stared blankly as thoughts filtered in and out of his mind, absent of coherent sense as they passed too quickly to be grasped. He was *actually* flailing – how embarrassing. Grasping his hair violently he pressed his head to the tiles, startled by the growl that came from his mouth.

How could he have not seen this?

His affinity for what it meant to be human was surpassed only by his understanding of himself. Enamoured with mankind he did not feel as though he belonged to it, rather he was other, constructed of the self he wished to be. That *self* did not have flaws. It did not feel anything out of the norm of his meticulous functioning. He understood and controlled all the emotions, whims and impulses that combined to make Hannibal Lecter. What he was feeling could not have been real.

Perhaps he was merely feeling Will's emotions?

He scoffed. Now he was reaching for answers that disobeyed any logic of his character, for to feel Will's emotions was a pure contradiction of his nature as any form of psychopath. Granted so was feeling love. But no, these feelings were his own, although it couldn't be denied that Will was rubbing off on him in unexpected ways, after all perception was a tool pointed on both ends.

But this potential to feel love, genuinely and as ardently as the romantics described it was never something he had accounted for. He had no barriers, no contingences in place to buffer such an unexpected emotion. He was used to feeling, but he chose quite deliberately whether to reveal the emotion if it was beneficial to further relations or ultimately his goal. As his affection and lust for Will grew he had refused to even entertain the possibility of love, and now he had failed so ardently to keep himself in check. Granted perhaps this failure was one even he could make. After all, he couldn't have possibly accounted for falling in love when it was so beyond the reasonable assumptions of what he had known he was capable of - especially after Mischa. Even with her, his sweet beguiling sister he hadn't felt love quite like this; she was his kin, an extension of himself. Losing her had been like losing a part of him - perhaps he had, as though she embodied all the innocence he could no longer possess, her death striking naivety from his life.

Yet so driven by his meticulously construct idea of self, he had naïvely failed to realise he could love – psychopathy be damned.

Nevertheless, even with this acknowledgment he could not entertain the idea of love, not when he was so deeply involved in a game where such vulnerability could destroy everything. He would not lose Will for the carelessness of his emotions – he would control this 'love'. By now the water had heated and turning it off Hannibal began peeling the wet material from his body. Taking a deep breath he gathered all the uncontrolled feelings within his mind, enclosing them behind a heavily barred door. Locking the door securely, he turned away from them, feeling a calm peace return to his mind. Trying to understand what he felt in this state would only sabotage everything he had worked so hard for; after all, emotions like those would bring him no good.

With Will balancing so precariously on the proverbial edge he could not trust the man's loyalty to him, especially considering his growing deceptive skills. That may have ultimately been a fault of Hannibal's, for the closer he got to Will the blinder he grew to his manipulations. And that did not suit him well at all.

Leaving the bathroom he pondered over the other conclusions tonight had drawn, contemplating what events he had to set in motion. Increased affectionate behaviour with Will around Alana was necessary to draw their relationship to its closing and it seemed that a certain red head was in need of a visit. He had been savouring the thought of killing Freddie Lounds and with the residue anger lingering in his veins it would certainly prove a *delightful* distraction.

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Framing Will for Abigail and the copycat murders was never a plan Hannibal was truly committed too. The goal had been to simply make Will believe he was a killer, provoking him to accept that version of himself. But Hannibal had stretched himself too far and Will saw the truth of his nature without the recognition of his own dark urges. Although, Will was willing to kill him. Not ideal, but it had ultimately been a step in the right direction and

Hannibal was perfectly willing to take a bullet to have his beloved embrace his potential. As such Hannibal had never quite forgiven Jack for stealing that chance from them both.

The evidence he had arranged had been to convince Will of his own guilt, as such he hadn't relished the thought of the FBI using his meticulously arranged design to imprison Will. In the end Will's incarceration was not his ideal situation; in fact it had been an obstacle to his goal, but Hannibal was patient. Very patient.

However he never anticipated how much he missed Will.

The longer they spent apart, the more Hannibal began to doubt the solidarity of his influence on Will, especially with Chilton trampling over his carefully laid out work. But Hannibal had few doubts he couldn't rectify. He had anticipated Chilton leading Will to the recovery of his memories - by extension he had no delusions that Will would come to realise that Hannibal was the Chesapeake Ripper. But the situation was so carefully arranged that Will's accusations against him had seemed mad even obsessed. Though Chilton's belief in Will had thrown a curve ball, the good doctor ultimately provided the perfect opportunity to secure his release and Hannibal's innocence.

The violence Will had displayed in his kitchen was certainly surprising, considering the gift of freedom Hannibal had bequeathed him. But his inability to pull the trigger had drawn two delightful conclusions. For though he may wish Hannibal dead, Will did not have the true intent to eliminate him, not after everything they had been through. However the most delightful conclusion was the development of Hannibal's fantasy deaths. Though he couldn't murder him, Hannibal was a vice of Will's darkness, a means of expression in which Will could relish murder again and again in his mind, meanwhile drawing a visceral connection of desire and intimacy between them. Like watching a victim's last flounder before death, Hannibal had awaited the death of Will's moral constraints. Patiently waiting he found that he quite enjoyed snarky Will as he struggled to balance on the line of bait and aggressor. It had been especially amusing to dine with Jack whilst Will calmly goaded him with his tongue in cheek attempts of cannibalistic humour. Even the bitter remarks of Hannibal's betrayal and blunt accusations on his nature had only endeared Will to him more.

Nevertheless, there were some doubts that Hannibal acknowledged were ultimately out of his control, especially when it came to Will. He could anticipate and manipulate Will's capabilities, but he could not identify their limitations with precision. Will was, as he had said before, entirely of his own nature and it was beyond him. He could only hope that Will saw the truth - Hannibal was the best thing for him, for he would embrace the parts of Will that left others shaking in fear, wanting to isolate and ostracise him. It was inevitable that Will would realise that there was truly no one in the world that was better for him than Hannibal. But he did doubt whether Will would be willing to embrace this or sacrifice it.

These doubts began to trickle away as he sat in Jack's office listening to the beautiful melody of Freddie Lounds' terrified screams. Will had finally done it. Where Hannibal had failed to remove the insufferable woman, Will had finally taken his revenge. He commended himself on the mask of shock and discontent he wore as Jack began to question Will, feeling such innate glee at his lover's success. Hiding a smile, he admired the flawless construction of the politely concerned expression Will held, deflecting each subtle accusation with

undefinable grace. Hannibal marvelled over his beloved moving about in this new element, playing Jack so very well. It was pure theatre, and Hannibal had to say, he loved watching Will work. He was in such control.

It just made Hannibal want to fuck him and drag it out until he begged.

Jack's eyes continued to wander behind them to where Alana apprehensively shifted her weight from side to side. Neither seemed convinced of Will's innocence in the matter of Freddie's disappearance and Hannibal had a moment of concern over the unfortunate reliability of phone tracing.

"I live in the middle of no-where Jack, if someone wanted to take her its…not a bad place to do it." A perfect performance, but there was an absence of warmth to Will's countenance that neither Jack nor Alana considered favourably.

Alana was practically thrumming with nervous energy, eyes bouncing between he and Will constantly. Moving from her spot by the door, she came to stand behind him, laying a hand on his shoulder. Will watched the way her fingers slipped slightly under the lapel of his jacket, an almost imperceivable frown crossing his face. Hannibal guarded any outward reaction to her clear gesture of possession, cautious to glance only briefly at Will under Jack's watchful gaze. It would seem that Alana had already begun stringing patterns of their behaviour together, yet was unwilling to confirm the intimacy of their relationship. Still at the risk of Will being a killer, she was more than willing to ensure Hannibal's safety from him. How admirable – and entirely unnecessary.

Jack pursued his lips and stood up. "Yes well, we have local patrol out looking for her jeep at the moment. I'll call you in later with any updates."

Laying his coat over his arm Hannibal rose to his feet, Alana's hand slipping down his shoulder to grasp his hand and Jack coughed loudly. "Actually Alana, if I could have a word with you."

Hannibal smiled reassuringly at her clear reluctance to leave his side, her icy blue eyes darting to take in Will who was currently staring unabashedly at where her hand intertwined with Hannibal's.

With a sigh she released him, watching closely as he and Will left the office, shoulders brushing comfortably against each other. They walked in silence, Will effortlessly matching his longer stride, layering his scarf in preparation for the outside chill. Slipping on his heavy coat, Hannibal smiled at the rush of cold air that blew over them as they left the bureau. He stopped at the bottom of the stairs and closing his eyes he breathed in the crisp air, smiling as he felt Will's presence beside him. Today was a good day. The harsh breeze was cleansing and opening his eyes he turned to see Will watching him, expression neutral but warmed. He grinned at him, resisting the romantic inclination to kiss the perfect creature before him and his red chilled nose.

Looking around the carpark he was disappointed to note that Will's car was there, no longer having a valid excuse to drive Will home. Sweeping the escaping silvered strands of

his ash fringe from his eyes, he licked his lips and opened his mouth to convince Will to join him for a celebratory dinner. Only Will beat him to it.

"Would you consider it impolite if I imposed on you this evening Hannibal?" Will asked a slight taunting cheek to his tone.

"Not an imposition at all dear Will." Hannibal smiled pleased that Will had used his name. Even Will's speech had become more refined, no longer the nervous, reservedly spoken creature who was too often silent for fear of the black horrors that might escape from his mind and take form in his words. The confidence Will was displaying was arousing, threatening to touch the feelings lying locked behind that heavily barred door in his mind. *Not yet.*

"Good, good. I'll be over shortly then, just have to ah, pick up a few *things*." He smirked and pulled away from his side to walk to his jeep.

Hannibal felt a lurch in his gut as watched him walk away, but dispelled it with a short cough. Walking to his Bentley, he considered what to prepare for tonight's dinner, mulling over only the best recipes in his mind.

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Hannibal could predict many of Will's actions, but he always managed to exceed his expectations in the most delightful ways. Tonight was no exception Will standing tall and calculated in his kitchen, calm as he slid over a parcel of meat.

Pork supposedly, Hannibal smiled, especially proud.

This was it; this was the moment that Hannibal had been waiting for. Will was enlightened to the perfection they would have together, having achieved the elevation of instinct that was beyond the restrictions of human norm, yet macabrely beautiful in its simplicity of animalistic drive. Yes, conflicted Will had been a spectacle to behold, hopeless as his mind fought against itself, ravage by moral conviction and a lust for murder – how he managed to balance it all within the bone arena of his skull was beyond Hannibal. But this transitioned, perfected creature before him was composed of power and decadence, taking and reaping what he wished without reservation.

"She was a slim and delicate pig." Will said coolly. The fledgling reticence he had after murdering Tier was gone, these eyes impassive yet displaying clear enjoyment. Although there were remnants of bitter disgust to his tone as he referred to their *favourite* journalist. Hannibal shivered; only wishing he had been there to see Will kill, to witness his calm pose as he ripped her life away, a predatory yet an angelic artist. But at least they could share this intimate moment together. Hannibal had sent Will many gifts over their relationship, and now as he looked into those calm eyes, the scent of blood and flesh lingering in his nostrils he felt as though Will was in turn gifting him.

“I’ll make you Lomo Saltado.” He smiled. Cannibalism was not a signature of Will’s kills and likely never would be - that much was clear. No, this gift of Freddie Lounds’ flesh was for Hannibal alone, a trophy presented to a mentor, perhaps even an appeasement. Gazing at Will he felt a powerful surge of pride.

“You slice the ginger.” He beamed and his cock twitched in his trousers as he passed Will the blade, watching him lovingly caress the stainless steel. Despite his veiled human façade, Hannibal was at his core a man consumed by carnal impulses – as such he had to resist the urge to skip dinner all together in favour of bedding Will then and there. However he was driven by thoughts far more dark; to share this death, this kill was more poignant, more intimate then anything he had experienced. It was inevitable that Will would eventually realise their compatibility, grasping what he would be sacrificing if he continued to play poke the psychopath with him, a game that, quite honestly, he was never going to win. Hannibal was thankful that Will had realised his plan to capture him was Sisyphean. Although Hannibal would do well to remain vigilante.

Will had been broken, but he had become all Hannibal knew he could, collecting himself to fill the cracks with gold of their making. Hannibal’s mark remained on each piece, remade to be free of the petty human restrictions that had suppressed the violent nature beneath. With the blind removed, he and Will could finally shape their world with the beautiful horror that resided within them. This was not fate, they had craved this moment from the flesh of others and the unfathomable reaches of their mind - this was *their* design.

Together they moved about the kitchen, Will delightfully apt with a knife, perfectly preparing the ingredients under Hannibal’s instruction. Occasionally pausing in their duties, their eyes would meet and Hannibal could not resist the smile that crept onto his lips. With the preparations finished Hannibal took over but found himself distracted by the way Will reclined against the bench, regarding him over his glass of wine. He was attentive to the way Hannibal cut and sautéed the meat in a soy-marinade, a knowing glint of anticipation to his blue eyes. Feeling the need to exceed his usual standard and match this evening’s theatrical flair, Hannibal added the onions, tomatoes and yellow Aji peppers to the pan, flipping them daringly around. Looking up from his task he was filled with a soothing warmth as he saw Will smiling down into his glass, revealing a brief line of white teeth. This could be his life with Will – a happy madness shared by two, their own Folie à deux.

Garnishing the plated meals, he grinned down at his handy work before carrying them into the dining room where Will was now waiting for him. Placing his own down first, he rounded the table to lean over Will’s shoulder and carefully laid the dish before him. Lingering with his hand on the back of the chair, he relished the heat radiating from Will’s back, indulging himself the moment to close his eyes and savour his delightful scent. He exhaled sharply as Will raised his head to bare his neck, soft curls pressed to his shoulder – a delectable offering. A thrumming resounded in his head in tune with the beat of his heart and he straightened up, forcibly returning to his calm equanimity lest he mar that neck in red. With a deep breath he pulled away, masking his concern as the door enclosing his feelings became more fragile by the second.

Taking his seat, he watched as Will took a bite of the meat, the corners of his lips curled, seemingly satisfied with the taste. Hannibal found his normally steady heart beat

picked up a few paces in anticipation – what a particularly delightful sensation. Though cautious, Hannibal had always enjoyed taking risks, and never had one been as dangerous and as satisfying as Will Graham. Being with Will, risking freedom to have him in all his actualised wonder by his side was a thrill unlike anything he had experienced. Will may not have forgotten the transgressions against him, but he had opened himself up to accept all that Hannibal had to offer. He could be seen now.

"The meat has an interesting flavour, its brazing, notes of citrus."

Chewing a piece of the meat in his mouth, Hannibal closed his eyes. Walking through the world alone had suited Hannibal, suited the disregard he had for the emotions of others, but with the limitless possibilities sharing his life with someone as perfect for him as Will – how could he not try to know him. Will's form of empathy presented an interesting opportunity, not unlike many of his other patients, but the depth with which he saw himself in Will was astounding. They were alike in so many ways, and Hannibal had been granted the chance to forge a bond and dispel the shadow of loneliness that had always followed him, perhaps at a distance, but nevertheless, always there.

The polished being across from him, slowly enjoying their tantalizing meal of the terrified, *dearly* departed Freddie was beautiful and dangerous. With cultivated instincts there may indeed be some perceived consequence that Hannibal could expect from Will in the future, punishment for his indiscretions. But Hannibal wasn't worried – for he had a gift of his own to give to Will, in all due time.

"The meat is bitter, about being dead." Will's smile was infectious and Hannibal grinned openly at the truly abysmal pun, nonetheless endeared. The metamorphosis he had undertaken was divine and rather rewarding for a man such as Hannibal. Trying to genuinely draw out violence from Will always had the chance to back fire, and on many occasions it had, but here they were. Sipping the wine Hannibal commended himself, after all, it was only fair to praise a feat when it was so righteously deserved. Pausing he considered Will for a moment, realising he didn't quite have all that he wanted from the man. He wanted to hear Will say it, to confess the truth of this meal – he *needed* him to say it.

"This meat is not pork." He fixed him with a look, watching carefully knowing his request was not so subtly hidden.

Will took his time to reply, contemplation pursing his lips before he held his gaze with a fierce confidence. "It's long pig."

'Long pig' - so endearing. He smiled. It was as good as any admission.

Scenting his wine, Will considered him with a levelled gaze. "You can't reduce me to a set of influences; I'm not the product of anything. I've given up good and evil - for behaviourism."

Cocking his head, Hannibal watched him in return. Yes, Will was a creature of his own nature, no longer ruled by regulations he had given up the law. Instead he had chosen to believe in himself, but it was a self that Hannibal had constructed with him. In essence he had chosen to believe in Hannibal. He *was* a product of Hannibal's design, regardless of how

much he believed he was not. But he was willing to allow Will the false power over his own design – he could consider it a gift. However Will had to realise something in return, the truth of Hannibal's nature.

"Then you can't say I'm evil."

Will stared at him incredulously as though Hannibal had told an insensitive joke, before lowering his head, blue eyes regarding him under heavy brows. "You're destructive, same thing."

"Evil is just destructive?" How disappointing ignorant of Will. "Storms are evil - if its that simple, and we have fire and then there's hail and the writers lump it all under acts of God." Hannibal was pleased at the curiosity on Will's face.

"Is this meal an act of God Will?"

Will stared him down for a moment before smiling in amendment and Hannibal felt a swell of satisfaction. Still ever cautious of giving too much away, he could now begin to expose himself, bit by bit, revealing truth of his rational. With each step towards being so completely known Hannibal would help Will truly see the beauty that lay between the threshold of life and death, the transcendence an individual could take on in death, carved from their hands.

Finishing their meal in silence, Hannibal was tickled by the idea that this was, irrefutably, a date. There was an air of sexuality about, a sexual intimacy that was brought to the tip of the tongue under the wonder of becoming. This dinner was Will's becoming as he willingly consumed human flesh with not only complete acknowledgment but a sensual enthusiasm. The lush swell of strings from the record player floated over the room and Hannibal was swept away by the luminescent touch it added to the evening. The serene delicacy of Gustav Mahler's Adagietto matched the quiet manner in which they regarded each other, bound together in acquired neutrality. They finally knew where they were with each other. Hannibal had never felt this kind of elation before – it was truly breathtaking.

Clearing the dishes off the table, Hannibal returned from the kitchen to find Will at the end of the table, glass in hand and eyes filled with a heated longing. Never one to deny neither indulgence nor refuse his impulses, Hannibal plucked the glass from loose fingertips and placed it down on the hard wood behind them.

Circling an arm around Will's waist he pulled them flush together, maintaining a breath's distance between their lips, waiting for Will to give in and a close the space first. He wasn't disappointed, sighing as Will languidly licked between his parted lips teasing his tongue with a tantalising sweep. Groaning he closed his mouth and suck hard at the presented flesh, tasting the lingering flavours of the Lomo Saltado underneath rich red wine.

Pulling away from the kiss, Hannibal raised a hand to trace the bottom of Will's mouth, grazing over the rough surface with the pad of his thumb. Any artist would be drawn to the hairpin curl of his lips, chapped from the habitual biting Will inflicted upon himself when he thought no one was looking. A beguilingly tragic look that matched his raggedy countenance, Hannibal honestly liked them best after he'd sucked a full redness into them. Tightening his

hold he bent down to kiss him again, grinning as Will began to impatiently strip off his jacket. Unwilling to create the same mess their last tryst caused, Hannibal stepped back and carefully laid the jacket over a chair.

He hummed as he felt Will crowd behind him, running his fingertips lightly over the sheer silk of his vest. Elbows against his ribs, Will looped his arms around Hannibal, hands clasping his shoulders to press them close together. Looking down at the table, encased in Will's embrace Hannibal felt a genuine sense of belonging and possession. It was heady and surprisingly comfortable. Releasing him, Will turned him and pressed him back against the table, his lips at the tendon of his neck. Grasping that head of curls Hannibal simply held him there, allowing him to bite and suckle at the flesh there as he hissed, tendrils of pain filling his cock with blood. Resting his rump on the edge of the table Hannibal widened his legs, providing Will with the access to grind their hips together.

The sensation seemed to be one Will wasn't quite prepared for as he gasped, body overcome by a full blown shudder. As he tried to catch his breath Hannibal stole it away, swallowing the low toned moan, pulling at his lips with earnest desire. Will shifted closer, hands taking hold of his ass to grind forward and feel the erection straining against his dress pants. Hannibal's breath hitched at the delightful sensation. There was no challenge in tonight's pleasure, just simple give and receive, each leading and pleasing in perfect sync. Reaching a hand between them, Hannibal grasped hold of Will's cock, palming him through his pants. The hands on his ass tightened and Hannibal smiled, relishing the gusts of air spilling over his cheek as Will tried to catch the breathy groans falling from his mouth.

Unbuckling Will's pants, Hannibal pushed them down about his thighs as Will latched onto the sensitive part of his neck and bit down. Momentary devoid of thought as that attentive tongue nursed the bleeding bite, Hannibal moved unconsciously with Will, allowing him to also strip his hips of trousers and underwear. Thrust back up against the table Hannibal hissed in pleasure; regaining his senses as Will's firm hand encircled their cocks, bring them to rub together with delicious friction. Warmed by wine and today's delightful achievement, Hannibal relaxed back and watched Will work them together, shuddering as his thumb passed over his head.

Licking a swipe up his palm Hannibal lowered his hand to join him and leaned forward to whisper in Will's ear. "We'll get our clothes horribly dirty."

"Shut up you prig." Grinning Will ran his fingers lightly up his shaft and Hannibal groaned.

"*Rude.*" He panted, securing a broad hand around them, focusing on smearing the pearling fluid from Will's cock down his sensitive underside. At this, Will wrapped his calloused palm solely around Hannibal, the drag of coarse skin against his sensitive flesh producing an illicit wave of desire.

Gripping hold of Will's shoulder, he nudged his hips forward with the motion of their hands, aware of a hand slipping over his hip. Will growled and shifted forward as Hannibal fisted him with rough strokes, dipping his fingers between the cleft of his cheeks. Hannibal's forehead fell forward to rest at Will's collarbone as those deft fingers slipped down to press

against the tight ring of muscle. Implicitly versatile, yet never without control, Hannibal was in no way adverse to letting Will fuck him – as long as it was on his terms.

Though those fingers insistently massaged his rim, Will began to gasp and tremble before him, seconds off reaching his limit. A shame, but it was something Hannibal could look forward to another time. Tightening his hold around Will's slick cock, he dropped his hand to reach beneath and press gently against his perineum in rhythmic dips. Crying out, Will's release shot directly up, curving to land regrettably all over Hannibal's vest. Even as Will panted through the waves of his orgasm his strong hand still worked over him, bringing him closer to the brink. Breathing harshly Hannibal noted the sound of chiming throughout the house.

As the sound got louder, Hannibal recognised it to be the doorbell and gritted his teeth, removing Will's hand from his aching cock. Will made a noise of discontent and Hannibal gulped down a few breaths, waiting for the person at his door to leave. Eyes widening in surprise he was startled into action as he heard the door open, hesitant footsteps echoing down the hall. Cursing his luck, he pulled up his pants and pushed a dazed Will back into the kitchen.

"What's wrong?" Frowning, Will did up his pants as they stood by the bench.

Trying to delicately stuff his painfully erect cock back down in his pants, Hannibal swept his hair of his face, trying to regain some composure. "An uninvited guest, that's what." He growled. How unbelievably rude!

At a light snigger, he looked up to see Will leaning against the counter, eyes staring down at his waist, perfectly relaxed as though he hadn't just orgasmed all over Hannibal's—

"*Keikti*!" He swore and began pulling of the offending material. A dangerous fury was filling him at the audacity of the intruder, uncomfortable with being put out of sorts, especially after such a good evening. Whoever they were, he intended to eat them for such discourtesy. Granted, it was most likely either Jack or Alana of who were currently too vital or unattainable to be eaten. Such a shame. Taking a breath Hannibal tsked and he threw the vest under the counter knowing neither Jack or Alana would react favourably to seeing evidence of their tryst. Although to be caught wearing it by Alana would have benefited his plan but it was a risk Hannibal was unwilling to take on the chance it was Detective Crawford.

Wiping the sweat from his brow Hannibal retrieved a fresh glass, relieved to note that his erection was dying down - although he was certainly no less furious at being interrupted. Filling his glass, he slammed the bottle down on the bench and Will jumped, turning to look at him in surprise.

"Hannibal?" From the next room a feminine voice was heard. *Alana then.*

Sighing heavily, Hannibal took a large drink and composed a mask of pleasant surprise. "Alana, we weren't expecting you." Moving around the bench, Will came to stand close to him, running his hand just in sight across his lower back. The touch was selfish in its intent to throw Alana off and generate a power play of ownership between them.

How quaint.

But Hannibal was in a black mood, feeling a cold wave of distaste for the woman before him, even unwilling to entertain Will's little possessive trip. Generally it was charming, but now as he fought to suppress the carnal intent to harm Alana for her transgression it was oppressively annoying. Sometimes Hannibal was afflicted with moods like this, an unfortunate reaction to having control taken from him, particularly when it left him at a disadvantage. In these instances, his carnal drive was more savage, overcome by the sheer purity of intent, violent or sexual but most often murderous. It was an impulse he had learnt to control by playing over the individual's potential death by his hands, flicking through the recipe bank in his mind till he was restored to a sense of calm.

"Will. I didn't expect to see you." Alana's eyes were focused notably where that hot hand pressed into the dip of his spine. Sighing Hannibal regained his decorum and thought of how he could twist this situation in his favour. With Alana here, it would be a shame to waste the chance to rouse her suspicious over he and Will.

"Nor I you." Will grinned wolfishly.

"I invited Will to test out the skill of a new butcher. We were very happy with the results." Will's smug and knowing look was hidden from Alana's sight as he turned to look at him.

"Oh, is there any left? I I haven't managed to grab dinner yet." Alana inquired moving further into the room.

"No." Will answered for him, a barely concealed growl lurking beneath the surface.

"I'm afraid there isn't any left." Hannibal softened the curt reply, glad he had put the spare plate in the fridge where it would remain until his discreet guest came to retrieve it later when the house was quiet.

Alana watched Will warily from the other side of the bench, a strained smile of her face. "Ah, well that's a shame." Looking directly at Hannibal, she seemed to be trying to communicate with him through her eyes. But he had no intention of decoding her meaning, fixing her with an innocently perplexed look. Frowning, she drew herself up right into her typical brazen posture, radiating self-assurance. "Hannibal, could I have a word with you."

Though the confidence of her appearance was striking, her tone left much to be desired, her remark a clear demand rather than a question. *Rude.* Beside him Will stiffened, the lines of his body taunt with danger. "I should go." Will whispered and in his eyes Hannibal could see a quiet anger.

So soon off a kill, Will's nature was unstable and if his jealousy was anything to go by he could prove a risk to Alana should he stay. Hannibal's first impulse was to provoke this anger within him, but it had had such poor results last time. Besides, Will would most likely be unable to deal with Alana's death. Granted that wasn't to say Will would kill her, for if anything was revealed to her – Hannibal would have to take matter into his own hands.

Although it was a shame he had to pass up on the chance to see Will in action.

Smoothing out the creases in his shirt Hannibal laid a hand at his elbow. “At least let me take you to your car.”

“A rather romantic gesture.” Will’s eyes were warm as he shifted closer, intimately so and Alana sucked in a breath. The playful glint resting there encouraged Hannibal’s intent to shine a little light on their relationship.

“I am a gentleman.” He flirted back before turning to Alana. “I’ll just be a moment.”

After tonight blatant sexual tension between he and Will, Alana would certainly confront him soon. Perhaps not tonight, tonight she would try to win his affection as was predictable of a woman of Alana’s calibre. Ever the one to give second chances, she would continue to doubt what she was seeing, unable to accept that her stable partner was not in fact all that solid - unwittingly infatuated with her past unstable love interest. It was a thing of playwrights.

With Will a hair’s breadth behind him, they both walked past her, and out of the corner of his eye Hannibal saw Will turn to cast Alana a glance. Whatever she saw there made her brows furrow in an anger that was rare on her pretty, regal face. Leaving the house he took a breath of fresh air, shivering as Will leaned behind him, nose pressed to the pulse of his neck. Though a surprising night, the changes that had transpired could be easily worked into the composition of events he had planned. Passing by him, Will reached his car, only to lean back against the door and beckon him to follow. Like a moth to the flame Hannibal brought their bodies together, looking down at Will with his most devilish grin.

“Remarkable boy you do delight me.” He murmured, refraining from kissing him lest he renew his desire.

But it seemed that was exactly what Will wished to do, reaching his hand down to grasp him through his dress pants. With a surprised grunt, Hannibal placed his hands on either side of Will’s head, bending his head to watch him rub his fingers along his cock in slowly tantalizing motions.

“I hate the thought of leaving you with her.” Will growled in his ear, working his pants loose so he could take hold of him in his palm, dragging just the very tip of his nail along the underside of his length. Hannibal shuddered, forehead falling to Will’s shoulder as his breath came quickly. With a surprising vigour his erection was easily goaded into a full-blown heat, lust gnawing at him. Sex always brought a simple order to his mind, leaving him to enjoy just the physical pleasure - a silence that was missing their first time, the occasion to crucial to allow him to simply appreciate. But this - this was good. Turning his face into the hollow of Will’s throat he bit him hard, relishing the pained moan that he ripped from his mouth.

The pressure around his cock tightened and Hannibal groaned, feeling himself draw close. Standing in the cold by a car with Will’s hand deftly bringing him to release felt so very juvenile, yet deliciously exciting.

“I want her gone so I don’t have this need in my stomach, clawing at me to kill her because she’s near you.” Will growled, sinful lips dragging over his ear and down his neck.

Hannibal smirked. His puppy had bite.

Breath hitching he twisted a fist into Will’s curls and yanked his head, bearing down on the exposed flesh as his orgasm ripped through him. Spilling over that warm hand, Will grunted in pain and Hannibal mouthed languidly over the wound as he did up his trousers. Panting heavily into the side of his neck, he raised Will’s hand to suck his bitter release off those fingers before bending down to kiss him violently. Will’s face twisted in disgust pulling back, but Hannibal latched onto his lip with his teeth, securing him where he was. Grimacing, Will submitted and Hannibal grinned, pushing his tongue deeper.

Will could play a good game with him, even lead him to succumb to his carnal desires, but he would do well to remember that he belonged to Hannibal. Tonight he had daringly chosen to engage him, wooing him with such a delightful gift and consciously initiating sex. He had accepted Hannibal and there would be no backing away from this. Hannibal was a consuming lover, tamed to match his temporary relationships, but there would be no hiding with Will. Any delusions Will had about what exactly he had gotten himself into Hannibal would gladly rectify.

“Until our next session?” Hannibal whispered in his ear, kissing it gently before moving away.

Will exhaled in exasperation, looking at Hannibal in irritation as he wiped his mouth. Suddenly his eyes narrowed and he smirked. “Possibly sooner.” He said suggestively, opening his car door. Getting into the driver’s seat without elaboration Hannibal watched him drive away, cocking his head at his cheek.

But he wasn’t fazed, finding that, for the most part, he rather enjoyed Will’s surprises.

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Chapter End Notes

Ha! He’ll enjoy ‘Freddie’s’ burnt corpse but he ain’t gonna like Margot’s little surprise!

Anyway, I wanted to figure out something. So I know I have a tendency to stay stuck in Hannibal and Will’s mind set. Is it ok for me to continue like this or would you more dialogue stuff? (probably just me being a bit insecure of my mind monologuing) But if you think its a bit on the heavy side or you like it just the way it is let me know xxx

Hope you enjoyed darling Fannibals

Elliearna

Daikushō

Chapter Notes

Put myself on probation from Tumblr the past few days to get this done but here it is! They're definitely not getting any shorter. Updated tags for this, nothing too major although I realised Cock Bocking Alana is totally a thing in this story.

Feeling a little bit insecure about this one - probably because of the sex. So let me know what you think, was it too long or out of character? I'd love to hear from you guys.

Enjoy lovelies Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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Never before had the scent of charred flesh and kerosene been so delectably amorous to Hannibal. Standing in the bureau morgue, he overlooked Freddie Lounds' blackened corpse, the skin cracked and flaking away to reveal the red meat beneath. On the other side of the dissection table Will hovered near Jack, his eyes raking longing over the expanse of charcoal skin. Drawn to his full height, those shoulders squared, the subtle almost imperceptible lip curl was the only indication of the dignified pride he harboured for his creation. And he should be proud - Ms Lounds had reaped what she had sewn, and Hannibal couldn't be happier.

Since their euphoric meal of Ortolans, he had been waiting with bated breath to see Will's design for Ms Lounds. And he was not disappointed with the results. The room was cold, great industrial air-conditioning units spilling a sub-zero breeze over them and yet Hannibal felt as though he stood by a fire. The closer he moved towards Will, the more the sensation grew emanating from his radiance. It was truly beautiful to see the fruits of his labour, this burned corpse the final gift of Will's metamorphosis. That wasn't to say he was completed, no, there were numerous things Hannibal could now teach him, but this gift signified the development in their relationship, a new chapter. Together they had reached oblivion, fuelled by a radiant flame.

As Jack's team analysed the forensic details Hannibal was struck by such an intoxicating reverence as he watched Will float around the table, hands discreetly caressing its silver rails. As Hannibal had expected, Will's capacity for violence was phenomenal and so well controlled. Even as he stood so close to his kill he was calm, blessedly absent of any of the pathological giddiness that overcame lesser murderers. He was perfect and Hannibal

imagined pressing his ear to his chest to hear his low steady heart rate, to feel it pulse against his cheek.

He longed for his sketch book to put the exquisite image onto paper - a new addition to his collection. Throughout their relationship, Hannibal had seen the many versions of Will, every one imprinted on his mind to be sketched later. Articulating each nuanced difference in the postures he made around others had quickly become a favoured pastime of Hannibal's. He had them all, from the small hunched shape Will had become around Jack to the twitching ball of attracted energy around Alana. Some of Hannibal's favourites had been the relaxed, uncontrolled splay of his knees when he sat in the patient chair or the focused, trance state he entered, head bowed as he traipsed around in a killer's head.

However, those postures were of the past - the shapes he made now far more to Hannibal's taste. Like the crouched curiosity he had as he observed bodies with ease, finally freed from the guilt for the pleasure he felt from another's crimes. Or the very image he had now as he admired his own handy work, his back a straight line of pride and satisfaction. Hannibal felt cheated as to have not yet seen the predatory calm of his beloved, bathed in blood, exuding power. For now, the best shape Will had formed by far, was the arching curve of his spine as he keened and ached over the bench top underneath him. Lowering his head, his eyes closed to wash the desire from his gaze.

"You must understand that blood and breath are only elements undergoing change to fuel your radiance. Just as the source of light is burning."

Will had taken Hannibal's words and evolved them into such artistry that for a moment he was breathless, struck deeply by the wonder Will could produce under his instruction. As the arrogant man with appalling facial grooming prattled on Hannibal began to imagine the art they would create together. Will would not kill as frequently; lenient towards the filth polluting the world, but in those moments Hannibal could persuade him, they would share such glorious kills. Would they work in harmony or would they evolve from Hannibal's design to encompass something new and mutual? He could see it within the reaches of his mind; he would teach Will to truly indulge just as he had taught their daughter. *Ah, not long now.*

"Why did he burn her?" Jack frowned.

"How many people has Freddie Lounds burned in her career?" The scraggly man said - Zellar if he remembered correctly.

Hannibal stepped forward. "Whoever did this was not striking out against Miss Lounds' exploitative brand of journalism. This is something else." For a moment Will watched Hannibal, head cocked curiously. "This is something sacred."

"Freddie Lounds had to burn." Will spoke up, moving forward, assertive as he brought their attention to centre on him - a far cry from the man who hid in the corners of rooms. "She was fuel. Fire destroys and it creates. It is mythical. She won't rise from the ashes, but her killer will."

Truly poetic, Ms Lounds was the fuel for Will's rebirth. A phoenix born from the ashes of a life of nervous empathetic trauma left ruined by Hannibal's hand, Will was now a creature of vivid radiance.

"He's the one to be noticed now."

Yes, this was a good surprise.

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This however was not.

Margot's voice faded into white noise as he tried to collect his thoughts, exerting an extreme control over the carnal nature within calling to destroy the women who had not only touched his beloved, but now carried his child. Foolish. How had he not seen this possibility? There were very few men Margot knew, less that she would consider sleeping with. Of course she would choose Will with his kindness and lack of expectation, yet Hannibal had been so absorbed with his own romance that he ignored the possibility. A foolish oversight.

Pursing his lips, he knew he would of course have to call Will in on this little session, but he contemplated the prospect of successfully removing Margot now. Unwittingly she had taken what did not belong to her, and Hannibal did not share, not at all. For her transgressions against him, he imagined killing her slowly to satisfy the unreasonable nature within. His imagination was acutely vivid as he pictured her death, the method he would display her, womb exposed - but no, he wouldn't subject Will to such punishment. Sucking his teeth he tried to resist envisioning them together, her hands pressed deep into his skin. He had to be calm and controlled lest he snap inexplicably and do something drastically irreversible. Taking a deep breath his fist clenched and he looked to his lap, aware that Margot was now silently watching him.

She was incredibly perceptive, having moved through her life as a vigilant survivalist. This made her acutely aware of the moods and reactions of others, even Hannibal's guarded ones. Swallowing deeply, she spoke softly; words pacifistic. "I know I've done wrong by Will, but he was necessary to survive this generation and – as you said – secure my legacy."

Though she sensed it, Margot was blessedly unaware of the depth or reasons for his discord and masking the rage in his mind, he met her gaze with cool sanguine eyes. "Of course, but Will must be informed. I will not insult you as to notify him myself as that breaches the confidentiality of our contract, but I would strongly advise you do it - now."

At his dangerous tone, her beautifully intelligent eyes lowered to reach his lips, instinctively avoiding the direct gaze of a predator. Smart girl. Licking his lips he reclined back, restoring his composure as she drew out her phone to call dear William.

Personally she was no threat and more than tolerable. He had avidly enjoyed his sessions with her, her quick wit and impeccable survival instincts reminding much of Ms Du Maurier. What intrigued him greatly was her savage dislike for her inhuman brother, one he sympathised with for Mason Verger was the epitome of what was wrong with this world. Discourtesy and exceptionally cruel preying on children and tormenting his sister; he was a stain that deserved to be wiped from his earth. For such reasons he was fully supportive of Margot's violent tendencies towards him, prepared to help her fashion a legacy within an unborn child. But now - well the child simply could not be allowed to live.

Margot could have her life - against his carnal and jealous nature that called for her death, for despite her manipulation of Will, she did not desire him. As such she had no intention to take Will from him, but she would not go unpunished for leading Will astray, disrupting Hannibal's plans for them. Were Will anyone other than himself, he would have likely kept his distance, but Hannibal knew Will would undoubtedly wish to be a part of the child's life - with Margot's permission or no. And Hannibal simply could not abide by that.

Although…he was curious to see the extent of Will's fatherly nature, how attached he would grow to his unborn progeny. Inclining his head, he watched Margot's face pinch slight as she revealed her news over the phone, preparing Will for what he would be walking into. It was a shame Hannibal could not see the widening of his eyes or the shock that would have frozen him still. Perhaps he would be shaking, a ball of apprehension and wonder. Will's reaction to being father and the upcoming adjustment to fatherhood intrigued Hannibal. For that reason alone he decided to tolerant the child's existence momentarily in order to observe Will until a chance was provided to take it from Margot - perhaps by proxy of Mason.

He could not have Will grounded here in Baltimore by a *foetus*, especially not when he had so many plans for their family abroad. This was a surprising situation, but manageable, after all he had done it before. Just as with Agent Katz, her uncanny relationship with Will had offered an unpredicted alliance. Her death was never truly personal although Will's reliance on her had irritated him. Cunning, but predictable he had baited her, each move strategic and she had come so willingly. He hadn't wanted to kill someone so genuinely invaluable, but he had savoured it nonetheless, although he was not so monstrous as to enjoy killing a child, it was but a means to an end. He would continue to take those Will grew attached to until he learnt to never let himself wander from his side. Though violent, Will was not as affably destructive as Hannibal and would certainly grieve for the death of those he connected with, blaming himself, and Hannibal. Will blaming him was not an immediate concern of Hannibal assured that it would never last, their co-dependency running too deep, a bond that would only continue to grow.

With the drive to murder Margot placated, they waited for Will to arrive, returning to a cordial conversation over her plans for the child. The necessity to disguise her pregnancy from Mason had the pieces of a plan forming in Hannibal's mind when Will finally joined them.

Margot stood and for a long while they both were still, taking each other in until Will's gaze slid to meet Hannibal. So fresh from anger, Hannibal felt an ugliness stir in his stomach reminding him that Will had *chosen* to sleep with Margot.

Gritting his teeth he hummed in displeasured and Will had the sense to look dismayed. “Margot, if you will.” He gestured for her to sit down, tracking Will as he moved to stand by the window.

Margot sighed, searching for the right words. “There's no baby. It isn't even an embryo yet, but here I am, feeling maternal.”

“You conspired with your unborn child to liberate yourself.You've made Will an unknowing accomplice.” Eyes straying from Margot, Hannibal searched Will’s form, the muscles around his eyes and mouth for his reaction to the impending news of fatherhood. What he found was a surprising amount of anger.

“I got what I wanted from Will but I didn't understand what I was taking until the strip turned blue.” Looking to Will, she fell silent though her eyes were brazen as he glared back, demeanour icy, fingers flexing as he processed.

“I'm not proud of myself.”

Will turned to face her, his movement slow and deliberate. “Nor should you be.” He paused, frowning suddenly “You said—.”

“I lied.”

Will huffed looking away in exasperation and Hannibal found himself rather amused by the way Margot handled Will, satisfied that there was certainly no love between them. Holding an expression of reasonable neutrality, Hannibal found Will’s hard eyes turned upon him. “Did you know?” His even tone spoke of an unvoiced betrayal.

Hannibal almost laughed at the question, filled with a swell of displeasure. Did he know that his lover would be propositioned by a woman trying to secure her freedom? No. Did he know that his lover would fall with *ease* into bed with her? No. Holding his anger at bay he held a mask of professional calm, averse to exposing Margot to the depth of his relationship with Will. “I was aware of Margot's goal of having a child. I was not aware you were the means to achieving it.” He said clinically, fixing him with a blank gaze.

Nodding Will sighed. “What do you want from me?”

“Nothing… or as much as you'd like to give.” Margot said calmly and Hannibal’s fingers flexed to grasp the chair. He had expected Margot to be distant, unwilling to involve Will in the life of her child, but this, was unexpected.

Pressing the back of his fingers against his mouth, he tuned out the rest of their conversation, closing his eyes to the violence that sung to kill her now. He would not let her take Will from him, from their family. Will had no need for another child, not with their first so patiently waiting for his return. Yet to make Will aware of this now would diminish the gift, making it seem a pitting battle between children vying for their father. No, he would not degrade his carefully laid out plan with something so trivial, their daughter would have the resurrection she deserved and Will would feel *ever* so blessed, Hannibal’s transgression

paling in comparison. Swallowing deeply he found he was breathing hard, Will taking small glances at him as he conversed with Margot.

Though he would not allow her to keep the child, he was still furious Margot had taken something of Will, something that could so easily pull him from his side. She was walking on remarkably thin ice. For her remark alone he would most certainly inform Mason of her pregnancy, subtly of course, ever the cordial manipulator. He was satiated in the knowledge that whilst Mason would not kill her, he would undoubtedly cause her harm, a minor punishment considering her indiscretions. For interfering so spectacularly in his plans for Will – she would be lucky to be alive. He certainly would have killed anyone else for far less of a crime against his claim on Will. She was lucky to have Hannibal's interest and benevolence.

Tapping his fingers on his bottom lip he withdrew from the moment, slipping into his mind palace. Within he saw strings hanging from the ceiling, threads of yarn signifying the lives of people he had touched, those he knew and those he had severed. It was here that he envisioned many of his plans, weighing choices, preparing for the various possibilities and consequences. With the strings at his hands he could see their links, a network of minds or 'chess pieces' as Will had once said – fit to be manoeuvred, observed or destroyed. Whilst most strings were branded a monotonous red, Will's was a vibrant blue, textured like satin amongst the rough yarn. Along its soft surface, red tendrils wrapped around it, linking others to him, connections made of their own accord and others of Hannibal's ministrations.

Severing the link between Will and Margot would be effortless with the involvement of Mason, the detestable man lead easily by the nose - more so with his desire to have a session with Hannibal. Likely Mason would force an abortion, or damage Margot so severely that she miscarried; either would suit Hannibal's purpose in more way than one. Given the time to attach to the child, Will's murderous violence would harden, any doubts of his nature fleeing as he was driven to eliminating Mason in the most truly vengeful way yet.

It would be magnificent.

Returning from his stupor he found Margot standing with her coat on, arms wrapped securely around her mid-line. Smiling he led her to the door, anger softened by the sheer awareness of the woman. She had sensed a change in their session today, one that brought her maternal instincts to the surface as she observed a glimpse of his darkness. Biding her farewell, his smile widened to bare his teeth. It was a shame she had trespassed so foolishly for she was a unique woman unlike any he had encountered. He would have felt bad for the harm that would befall her – if only he cared.

Closing the door, he remained facing it, tuned to the rush of air leaving Will's lungs. To face his lover who had taken another to his bed flooded him with a dark jealousy and he imagined wrapping his hands around Will's neck, cutting off his air supply, releasing him before he passed out - all just to see panic in those eyes. Feelings of violence towards Will were very rare, thought of only to combat the frustration he felt over their situation or Will's resistant behaviour. However, recently Will had been playing smoothly to his music, darkly matched against Hannibal to the point that he found discord in his deception, thoroughly challenged but occasionally irked. Sometimes it made him long for the sweet, damaged thing

he had had the chance to cradle so lovingly as he fell into the dark. Granted this creature was far more beautiful, yet had *still* not learnt who between them truly held the power.

He sighed; such was the unfortunate limitations to his understanding of Will - ever his unpredictable result.

Striding across the room he returned to his chair, unbuttoning his jacket as he comfortably arranged himself, one leg folded over the other. Cleared of today's patients, Hannibal decided to make this an impromptu session. "What would you like to talk about today Will?" He asked cordially.

It seemed however that Will would not take his attempt at textbook therapy today, snorting derisively. "Is that seriously all you're going to ask me?"

Regarding him nonchalantly Hannibal kept his silence.

"I expected you to be angry." Though he drifted closer, Will's body was closed off and wary, preparing for onslaught.

"Don't mistake my composure for calm Will; I assure you, I am quite angry." Hannibal was like stone, phlegmatic and impassive, the upholstery groaning as he shifted slightly.

"You have no right to be." Will looked down at him, face angled in perfect replication of the sophistication Hannibal achieved so effortlessly.

Not the first reflection he had found of himself in Will, he wondered how unconscious the empathic transfer was. Perhaps it all just a seductive addition to the enticement of the lure - if so the reason was rather void now. Hannibal found no appeal in the pure reflection of himself in Will, for that was certainly not his brand of narcissism, preferring instead the adoption of his behaviours as Will's refined nature encouraged his own into the light.

"It would seem that we disagree, doesn't it?"

"Bite me." He snapped.

"Is that an invitation?" Hannibal's eyes glinted dangerously. Granted in his mood, he couldn't assure that it was solely seductive.

"Fuck you." Will grumbled, passing a hand over his face, a common gesture of his attempt to recollect himself.

Arching an eye brow Hannibal curbed his annoyance, waiting patiently for Will to apologise, only to be met with a long silence. He sighed. He punished so many for such disgusting language and yet he abided Will's. How predictably human that he too was drawn to traits he despised.

"Please, sit." He held out a hand, indicating to the seat Will had yet to claim in silent command. Staring incredulously back Will stood his ground and Hannibal raised his chin. The past week had shown Hannibal that all failures on his part had come from the indulgence

of his more emotional whims, allowing his plan to fray at the edges for the desire to satisfy Will's wants. Practically speaking, disregarding their romantic relationship would have served his goal far better, each action carried to its full purpose – instead Hannibal had wanted this, greedy in his lust and it had cost him the sophistication of his plans' execution. He sighed; regardless, all was progressing as it should save a few changes, but it was essential he regained his grip on his plan's enactment. Hannibal could feel the end of their game swiftly approaching and he could not afford any more mistakes. Misjudgements he could forgive, for they were but a failed expectation of another's perceived reaction, but he could no longer indulge the mistakes generated by his own needs. Not if he wanted to keep Will.

Sighing, Will finally complied, weight falling ungracefully into the chair. "I'm going to be a father." He breathed in wonder.

"For the second time." Hannibal added, expressionless.

Will's eyes snapped to glare at him, a curious and dangerous anger flaring in those depths. It was so raw and Hannibal realised it was possibly the truest emotion Will had shown him since he resumed his therapy. Perhaps he had been too quick to believe he had won their game if such pure anger lay within Will. Then again, it was a understandable reaction to so flippantly mentioning Abigail, for Hannibal had grown desensitised to her death. But he should more consciously refrain from expressing this response lest he give the game away.

"Will you hurt her?" Will asked softly.

Hannibal sighed, shaking his head. "What do you think I am Will? What do you see?" Leaning forward eagerly the sleeve of his jacket slipped up his forearms revealing a slip of cream cuffs. He had never invited Will to look, but he was certainly curious how deep he saw, what he could make out from the gaps in his 'person-suit'.

Will seemed surprised by the question, but nonetheless leaned forward, pressing his elbows into his knees, hands drawn under his chin. "You claim you are not evil, but you are not human." He paused, head tilting a fraction to the left. "You are the devil, a creature composed of smoke and whims of avarice with the sole purpose of consuming everything that you touch. I don't believe you were ever *just* a boy, you've always been something – other."

His eyelashes fluttered for a moment as his face drew tight and perplexed before those eyes softened. "But I see that you were shattered, fed the thick poison of privation and malice, but it didn't kill you, it made you stronger, you grew with hardened bones of blackened tar."

Hannibal was quiet, before he nodded his head, conceding the truth in the words. "Very good. Your gifts are truly exceptionally. In the end we are all explicable - however not everyone is extricable. It makes us unpredictable, and intrinsically fascinating."

"Are you entangled by me?"

“To some extent,” He conceded. “But it is a mutual entanglement, I think you realise your inability to be released from your entwinement with me. Tell me, when you slept with her, did you think of me?”

Will recoiled, turning his head away to grit his teeth. “No.”

Hannibal smiled at the abysmal attempt of a lie. He did not reward lies, but he could forgive him, recognising his fear at his dwindling autonomy. He had moulded Will into a creature of emotive evil - naturally it would lie, but he would do well to do it sparingly.

Rising to his feet, Hannibal walked towards Will, his steps deliberate and he enjoyed the spark of alarm in those eyes. Swallowing deeply, Will pushed himself further into his chair, baring a slip of white teeth. “I’m not your pet.”

Smiling fondly Hannibal shook his head, leaning down to trap him into the chair. “No, no you’re not, but you are mine.” The smile turned cruel as he cupped Will’s jaw, tilting his head up. “And I don’t take kindly to others touching what is mine.”

He would no longer curb the jealousy Will’s careless actions had generated; he would suffer the brunt of the truly possessive creature Hannibal was within. No more actions and words of noncommittal control, Hannibal wanted to unleash the raw, vulnerable creature that longed so deeply for Will. He would use it to ensure Will would never again roll around in the bed of someone so undeserving of him and his wonders. On the night they dined on Freddie, Hannibal had taken Will’s actions for commitment and acceptance of his descent into the thick corroding consumption of their desires and he would not be convinced otherwise. Not now that Will had recognised Hannibal’s claim and laid a claim of his own in return. Will may wish to take it back, but Hannibal would break through to the lustful darkness that craved this just as much as him.

Caressing his jaw, his grip was firm, grounding and he smiled as the tenacious resistance in Will’s eyes flickered in its resolve. Crouching down, he brought them to equal standing, resting his other hand on Will’s taut thigh. In response those blue depths focused to see only him, pupils dilating as traces of red rose onto his cheekbones. His tense body began to relax, starting with a gentle exhalation from soft parted lips as his head dropped to relax its weight into the cup of Hannibal’s palm.

“Good boy.” Hannibal whispered and kissed him fiercely even as irritation filled his eyes with flint.

Will’s hands flew to his chest, forceful as they tried to push him back, teeth tearing at his lips. Tasting the fresh coppery taste of his own blood he smirked, endeared that Will thought pain would dissuade him. On the contrary, Hannibal was accustomed to the pleasure pain could give him, enjoying the infliction of sexual pain on his person - however he far preferred to be the inflictor, as was expected with his sadistic nature towards the lowly creatures he selected for his displays and meals alike. However there was a special part of him that enjoyed giving Will’s pain, avidly watching and antagonising the torment of his mind and reality. Licking the blood from his lip, he violently gripped the hair at the base of Will’s neck, yanking his head back to latch onto the tender flesh with his teeth.

“Hannibal!” Will protested, the hands urging him back now apprehensive of pushing him away when he held onto such a sensitive part of his throat.

Such a smart boy too.

Rewarding him, Hannibal released his neck, dragging his tongue along his pulse and up over the red bite mark to the raspy sharp angle of his jaw. Shifting his other hand, Will’s leg jolted in surprise and his trousers bunched as Hannibal pushed his hand up towards his hips, feeling the strong muscles beneath. Slowing to draw soothing circles into the soft inside of his thigh, he smiled as his fingers grazed the harsh outline of the bulge in his pants. At the low hitching gasp Will released, Hannibal blatantly palmed him, relishing how that sound turned into a deep groan, his blunt fingers digging into his shoulders.

“Be honest, come now Will.” Hannibal kissed the sensitive spot beneath his ear; hand moving rhythmically over Will’s filling erection. “Did you think of me when you were with her?”

Pulling back, Will glared though his gaze flickered from Hannibal’s eyes to his mouth, conflicted, wanting. After many long seconds he sighed in amendment, the tension leaving his body and his hand seized Hannibal by the neck, dragging him down as he surged forward to crash their lips together. Bracing himself with a hand on the crisp leather chair, Hannibal let Will lead the kiss, moaning as his tongue invaded his mouth in lashing motions, stealing his breath.

When he met Will, he never considered the possibility that their relationship would or even could become like this, and yet now he couldn’t imagine their lives without it. Though a creature of similar instinct, in sexual desire he and Will were exact opposites, Hannibal’s sexual tastes and activity far exceeding Will’s. Born from his experiences of social exclusion, Will shied from most physical contact taking few sexual partners, a fact that hadn’t surprised Hannibal when they first spoke of it. Even then, during that therapy session, he had felt a curious stirring, nothing that had been worth identifying, but it seemed that despite wanting only to awaken and befriend Will’s darkness, unconsciously he had always seen the chance for more.

Dropping to his knees, Will moved with him, shifting to the chair’s edge as he kept their lips sealed together, his thighs bracing Hannibal’s hips tightly. Breaking the kiss to draw a breath, Hannibal sucked in fresh air, continuing to tease Will as he turned to pepper kisses along his neck. Hannibal sighed, taking pleasure in the idea that he ignited such a frenzied desire in Will unlike anything he had ever disclosed to him. No longer resigned to fucks and romance of lacklustre enjoyment, together they were animalistic and it drove Will from the contrite enclosure of his sexual need. Pulling down at his collar, Will dislodged his tie as he dove down to suck a deep bruise at his collarbone. Groaning, Hannibal opened up Will’s trousers, watching as his limbs spasmed and convulsed when he took in him in firm grip.

Placing a hand at the centre of his chest, Hannibal held Will down as he pumped him in a steady but languid pace. Sweat beaded at Will’s forehead, his fingers flexing around the arms of the chair, too far from Hannibal to grasp him and restrained beyond any other action other than patience and pleasure. It was clearly driving him mad, much to Hannibal’s delight. When those blue eyes could no longer taking in the sight of his cock moving smoothly

through Hannibal's fist, his focus turned to meeting his gaze, eyes full of a coiled intensity. Oh how they enjoyed their power plays. Though his eyes held a challenging and cutting flint to them, his body continued to arch, soft exhalations slipping from his kiss-bruised lips. Hannibal loved the honesty of Will's body, even in the beginning when his mind held reservations; the darkness inside him acted purely on impulse consuming what it wanted with little regard of Will's inner conflicts.

Was his body this honest with Margot?

The thought quickly cooled off his own erection, flooding his blood with a bitter anger. Hypocrisy was something Hannibal was quite aware he had, yet even though he had been sleeping with Alana whilst romantically intertwined with Will, she was an attachment he intended to severe, not one he sought out – at least not anymore. But Will had chosen consciously to sleep with Margot, and perhaps he acted with revenge for Hannibal's behaviour at lunch. After all he always knew there would be some form of consequence, but he was not without his own form of retaliation. Still, his thoughts were consumed by questions of comparison, thoughts reserved for the insecure and anxious – of which Hannibal was neither. He held complete confidence in his ability…and yet. These sounds falling from Will's lips, had he made them for her, or were they his sounds alone?

Growling he surged up to bend over him again, attacking Will's open mouth to swallow the low moan. The only way he could be sure was to have Will play new sounds – sounds that were only Hannibal's.

Standing up he released Will entirely, leaving him to keel forward with a groaned whine of confusion. His face was flushed, eyes tinted by lust even as they frowned up at him, licking his lips as he panted. He was truly a breath-taking sight, raised onto his elbows, his legs splayed with his cock standing stiff out of his pants. Hannibal had a moment of sympathy, realising that Will must have been incredibly close to orgasm. On the other hand, the desperation written over that sweaty dishevelled body was beautiful in its own right. As Hannibal continued to linger at a distance, Will looked out of sorts, tormented by his desire, but hesitant to ask for his return. Never willing to give him control, but ever willing to let him take – how perfectly matched they were, for though Hannibal too would never offer, he would let Will take all of him. Why even now this moment could change if Will turned on him to push him down into the carpet or over the desk.

Hannibal shook himself of the image, achingly hard once again. But Will had a lesson to learn. Never again would he attempt to remove the mark of Hannibal's claim – if he did, Hannibal would leave something more permanent. For now, Will would feel his jealousy, his possession as he made his body burn and ache for him alone.

"Stand up."

Will was surprised by this command, yet did so with no objection body overwhelmed by lust. Drifting closer, Hannibal stopped when he could feel Will's breath on his face, eyes raking over his body with undisguised want, yet he leant away as Will swayed forward. Disappointment flashed in Will's eyes and Hannibal gripped his chin.

“Stop. No more games – I will not let you play with my feelings. The risk against you is far too high, so you will do well to be honest with me.” As he said this, Will’s gaze dropped and he shuffled awkwardly hands moving to return himself to his pants.

Snapping a hand out, Hannibal stopped this quickly, piercing those confused eyes with an inscrutable stare. “I will give you one chance, and only one. Do you want this?”

Will’s eyes widened, clearly surprised that Hannibal had crossed the boundary that they had silently agreed to. Hannibal realised he was wrong to have never confirmed Will’s intent and dedication to their affair, but he would rectify it now in force, no longer willing to act on assumptions alone. Will would confess to his want, or Hannibal would turn away, and things would progress unhindered by sex – and their romantic feelings. Will seemed to recognise this in his expression and his brows furrowed in hesitance before he nodded, clearly and definitely. Hannibal sighed, releasing the breath he hadn’t even realised he held. “Say it.” He rumbled.

“I – I want this. I shouldn’t, but damn it I want this.” There was a vulnerability to Will that Hannibal hadn’t seen in a long time and it made a warmth blossom in his chest.

He took a moment to look over him, searching for any deceit, any residual hesitance, but Will was shameless in his admission, head tilted up in request for a kiss. Satisfied, Hannibal took him by the hips, trailing his hands over the raise of his buttocks and slipped them under the band of his underwear to drag his pants down to his knees. Will shivered as he stroked lightly along his legs to the tender underside of his thighs and strengthening his grip, he dug his hands into the pert flesh of his ass. With a moan Will closed the distance, kissing him hard, pouring raw passion into the rough way he dominated his mouth. Groaning, Hannibal moved to lead, only to have Will bite his questing tongue before shoving his own down his throat.

Kneading his ass, Hannibal allowed Will to suck and bite at his lips till they stung, burning with too much blood. Backing him up, Hannibal knocked him back into the chair. Dropping to his knees, he pulled away from Will’s assault to bended down, pushing up Will’s shirt to nuzzle the soft stomach before trailing down, lips grazing over his pubic hair. The loud groan that perforated the air was worth the painful thrust Will gave as Hannibal took him in his mouth, breathing heavily through his nose. Will’s hands wound their way through his hair, conscientious enough not to push him down, yet forceful as they held him there, pleasure rocking through his body.

Hannibal hummed, personally quite fond of his partners grasping his hair and Will shook as the vibration carried down his cock. Gripping his base, Hannibal dragged his tongue along the underside, concentrating his pressure just beneath the head where Will produced the most melodic gasps. After a time of working his hand along his cock, he dipped his tongue under the foreskin, savouring the place where Will’s taste was strongest and the hands in his hair tightened, knees at his side shaking violently.

“H-Hannibal I’m gonna—.” Will’s head flew back as a deep throated moan ripped out of him and Hannibal pulled up from his task.

As Will glared down at him, he caught the remnants of saliva and precum with his tongue licking them off his lips before smiling. “Well we can’t have that.”

Securing his grip at the base of Will’s cock, he relished the groan of dismay as Will realised he planned to prolong this. Unfair perhaps, but he was not above reproaching his lover in one way or another. With his grip tight enough to hold off any orgasm, Hannibal engulfed the rest of Will’s length hearing a shout from above.

“Fuck!”

Hollowing his cheeks, he gave a long languid suck before lifting off to fix him with an amused look. “Language Will.”

“*Language*! F-fuck you, god please just—.” Will’s growl was cut off as he continued his ministrations, playing with the head of his cock and licking lazy strokes up its length.

“Please what Will?” He taunted, receiving a rather rude yank at the hair, but no reply as Will fumed impatiently. Suddenly, looking up at him Hannibal found himself considering a scenario where he was not the one in control, where it was Will tormenting him, abusing and using his mouth solely to pleasure himself. As a tremor ran thorough him he smiled, storing the idea for a later date. Gazing at the curving arch of the Will’s cock, he leant forward prepared to swallow him down again when he heard a knock at his office door.

Quickly realising he hadn’t locked the door he called out, “Just a moment please,” and grimaced at the gruff sound of his own voice.

Releasing Will he rose to his feet, coughing lightly to clear his throat whilst Will smirked at his disarray, seemingly unconcerned of his own shamelessly display. Actually that wasn’t entirely true, in fact he looked very interested in murdering whoever it was at the door and Hannibal shivered – what a delightful thought. Straightening up his hair, Hannibal wiped away any excess off his face with his handkerchief before turning to Will.

“I’ll take care of them, pull up your pants - but do not do them up.” He commanded, Will’s eyes smouldering at the promise that this was not over.

Returning his handkerchief to his pocket he brushed down his suit and made his way over to the door. Glancing back at Will to make sure he seemed reasonably inconspicuous from this angle, he swung open the door to reveal a quizzical Alana. Cursing himself he realised he had in fact promised to take her out for lunch. With a slightly strained smile, he inclined his head in a courtly fashion. “Alana, I’m afraid I have inconvenienced you with my poor organisation.”

“What do you mean?” She inquired, moving to take a step forward. Reaching out to grab her arm, he shifted to obstruct her movement, adopting an expression of embarrassment. “I’m sorry Alana, I have yet to conclude my session with Will.”

At the mention of Will, Alana’s brows furrowed and she glared at him. This reaction was surprisingly straightforward and though he was thrown for a moment, Hannibal was rather impressed by her backbone. Then again, Alana had always been a powerful woman

willing to fight for her conviction. In fact, before the possibility of his life with Will had unfolded, he had pondered taking Alana as his wife for the pleasure of her company and the shade of normalcy. Though it had never been an idea he could settle on, too reluctant to shuffle his secrets from his house and share his space, but mostly because he could not count on his ability to keep her blinded with her constant involvement in his life. Much like how he had acquiesced to Alana's judgment when he had taken Abigail from the hospital a near year ago, Hannibal dropped his shoulders, hands upturned apologetically.

"I'm afraid we are discussing some rather troubling developments." He smiled uneasily and her frown only deepened. Aware that she was already suspicious of Will, his comment was purposefully vague, yet meant to antagonise this perspective as well as tickle her suspicions over their affair. Quick witted and vastly intelligent, guiding Alana had always been one of his most interesting challenges - until Will of course, but he had only ever had minimal ability in pacifying her stubbornness.

"Hannibal…" she sighed, voice too low to be heard by Will. "He's dangerous and after Freddie—." She sucked in a breath, as though surprised by the voicing of her suspicions. "What are you doing with him? Are you really helping him, or are you protecting him?"

"Alana, this is really not the time." He warned, the notes of agitation in her voice alarming him to the possibility that she may very well confront him here and now. It was almost unfortunate that she seemed more herself, no longer so blinded to his charms and ability to dissuade her actions. It brought to him a fresh reminder of why exactly he had always admired her, but her actions were growing too strong, too angry for the path he had intended.

"I'm just worried that—" She frowned, noticing something on his face. "You've got something—." Reaching out a hand, she leaned forward to wipe away the mark from his upper lip.

Realising it was most likely evidence of his acts with Will he snatched her hand down, holding it roughly. "Alana." He growled and she returned his piercing gaze with a look of shock, tainted by an undercurrent of fear. He had a moment of concern that he may have revealed his dangerous nature to her. Gritting his teeth, he released her hand, once again masking his irritation with a contrite expression.

Despite the need to stop her from utilising their familiarity to push his boundaries and encroach on his life, she was never supposed to see him as dangerous. As she continued to stare at him in worry, her silence carried with it a foreboding fear. There was now an unfortunate probability that Hannibal had aroused her suspicions over the potential violent tendencies Will had warned her about, a far cry from his intended plan. There was never a chance of recovering his relationship with Alana, for whether she saw him as an indulgent adulterer and abuser of his professional authority or suspected he was a serial killer, the truth about him would be revealed upon leaving America with Will. Either way, as long as the pretence continued for duration with which he needed it too, all would be well.

"Alana, I'm afraid I must insist that you leave. At the conclusion of this session I will most assuredly call you, but you have to go - *now*." He ordered. He could physically see her

concern over his harsh behaviour overriding the angry bristling beneath the surface and thankfully she downcasted her gaze, turning away.

Just as he was closing the door, her hand snapped out and caught his forearm. “This is the last time okay?” She informed. “And just…please be careful.” Her gaze softened and he gave her a genuine smile, for though it was misplaced, her care for him was touching. He was also amazed at her dedication, for by now she would be almost certain of he and Will’s affair, regardless, she was determined to give him the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps she was unwilling to admit her romantic life was once again falling apart, the promise of stable life a delusion she had only dreamed up.

Where he had no qualms hurting Margot for his lack of connection to her, he recognised the cruel nature of the harm he was causing Alana. Not to say he felt guilty, but he did regret causing pain to a woman he, for lack of better words ‘loved’ albeit unconventionally.

Closing and locking the door behind her, he turned to face Will, who was watching him patiently over his shoulder. No, not patiently – eagerly. Despite the depression of the encounter with Alana, his lust was easily renewed with quite a curious vengeful vigour, sparked by the need to be rid of the mask he wore for all but Will. Once passing unnoticed had been an enjoyable challenge but it no longer held the same appeal in the face of his desire to be seen. He was no longer satisfied with the mundane, needing the company of a true equal, an individual of shared psyche. Though Will had not started out this way, he had progressed as desired, becoming so entangled within Hannibal’s way of thinking that his own manner had changed. He had morphed not into Hannibal himself, rather he absorbed his nature to reveal the true psyche beneath that saw a kinship within Hannibal.

Ah, that was it truly. The vigour of his yearning for Will was in the desire to consume the heart and body of his equal. The individual who’s existence he had always pondered over, but never believed he would find. Yet here he was, waiting for him to return to him.

Walking to his desk, he opened a drawer, reaching in to grasp a most needed item, eyes locked with Will’s. Seizing the bottle of lubrication, he slipped it into his pocket but not without ensuring Will caught sight of it, smirking at the intensity of the dark look shadowing those eyes. They were each silent as Hannibal returned to kneel before him, pleased with the evidence of Will’s interest, his cock jutting out from the opening in his trousers. Leaning back on his heels he motioned for Will to stand up and pulled the bottle from his pocket.

“Remove your pants. Underwear included – shoes as well.” His voice was tight as he felt an agonising pulse in his cock at Will’s proximity. At his full height with Hannibal on his knees, Will towered over him, legs now bare and his cock bobbing at right before his lips. Angling his head, Hannibal was tempted to take him in his mouth here, relishing the height difference, to gently run his teeth over his sensitive length and feel Will’s hands in his hair, commanding and strong. But more ardently he wanted to see him open and wrecked on his fingers, shaking with the need of a release only Hannibal could give him.

Taking a hold of Will’s hips he lowered him down in the chair, grinning at the glare Will wore for his delicate handling of him. Where Will had once been a man of fragile bone and weary skin pulled too tight over fragmented horrors, like Hannibal he had hardened. Now

he was fire, consolidated into molten stone, alert and critical of every action as he resided so comfortable within their shared psyche - their mutual manner of thinking. Hannibal groaned and parting his lips, he swallowed him all the way to his base, feeling the muscles in his throat strain. It had been a while since he had taken a male lover, longer still since he had done this, but the burn, the way his throat shuddered and convulsed around the intrusion was worth the uncontrolled whine that came from Will.

Sucking off, he licked his lips, swallowing a few times to adjust the muscle before looking up to Will, ready to speak. But Will's expression brought him up sharply, a serene combination of ecstasy and adoration.

"Hannibal." He breathed, hand moving to cup his face, his rough, fisherman fingers grazing gently over the rise of Hannibal's high cheekbone down to the moist swell of his bruised lips in what he could only describe as worship. Hannibal's heart throbbed in his chest, its pace unusually fast as he was flooded with reciprocal feelings of adoration and once again; Love. The door had cracked open.

"Your knees." He murmured, before clearing his throat, taking command of his love ailed voice. "Hold your knees up Will – now."

Will frowned, gentle expression dropping with his hand, but he nonetheless grasped his knees to his chest. Sighing Hannibal parted them so his feet hung off the chair and Will grasped under his legs, blushing furiously as the position exposed everything.

"Hannibal, this seems a little…ah."

"Shh." He hushed, sucking him down again and uncapping the bottle out of sight he poured a generous amount onto his fingers. As he worked over Will's cock, he brought his fingers to his ass, teasingly running a finger along his cleft before pressing a lubricated finger to his rim. Will's hips jolted forward, choking Hannibal momentarily and he grazed his teeth over him in punishment, hearing the breathless curse of his name. Grinning inwardly he pushed his finger inside, bracing Will's hips with his other hand and worked deep, searching for the bundle of nerves within.

Finding it, he inserted another finger, coaxing him with powerful strokes and above Will shouted, legs shaking. Closing his eyes he hummed in pleasure, wanting to hold onto this moment forever. Within his palace he stored the sounds, the feeling of Will around his fingers, his cock heavy in his mouth, realising that it was there again, that feeling. Not the affectionate unconventional love-like emotion he had for Alana and Will most of the time, but the one that felt as though Will was replacing him. A feeling of pain and desperation, it was as though Will was consuming everything of Hannibal, replacing the hollow centre of him with himself and Hannibal was willingly letting it happen. The unfathomable feeling was like an assault on his being, his defences powerless to withstand the elation and agony it was bringing with it.

Above, Will began to gasp his name and he sped up his actions, no longer able to draw out the moment, his heart pounding painfully in his chest. He had become too emotionally fixated on the moment, the seductive allure of it allowing the return of that unfathomable feeling. Pumping his fingers, he released Will's hip to circling his hand around

the base of his cock, sucking hard at the swell of its head. Will began to moan in earnest, sweat trickling down from where he held his legs, toes curling.

"Han-Hanni- ah. Fuck! I'm gonna- I can't—." He groaned head flying back as Hannibal doubled his efforts, breathing through his nose as open his throat up again to take him deep. For all his noise, Will was rather silent as he came, voice hitched before breaking into a long sigh. Swallowing the bitter release, Hannibal cleaned off the remnants from Will's cock, removing his fingers to wipe them on his handkerchief – which would most certainly have to be thrown away (blessedly it wasn't one of his favourites, unlike a certain vest).

Dropping his legs, Will suddenly launched forward, knocking Hannibal onto his back. His face was slack, eyes clouded in the afterglow of his orgasm, curls mussed, once again looking less like the predator he had grown into and more like the lost pup he had once been. He truly looked a mess as he panted above him, hands kneading over his chest. Slowly an alert darkness returned to his eyes and his motions became sensual, seeking out the spots that had Hannibal's body arching involuntarily. Grabbing his wrists, Will held them above his head, diving down to kiss his sore lips greedily.

"God, you look amazing, your lips – they're so swollen, so fuckable." Switching to hold his wrists in one hand, Will snaked the other down to the confines of Hannibal's pants where his erection was pressing urgently.

It would be so easy to let Will hold him down and bring him to a beautiful release, but he couldn't. Not with all the emotions running rampant through his body. Not when he needed to tame them, restore them behind lock and key – and especially not when he really wanted to come undone beneath Will. He had to have more power over himself, more control.

"Will, no." he stated clearly, glad his voice hadn't shaken with need.

Will looked down at him, confused and hurt, delivering a sharp pain to his chest. But he couldn't, he had to prove that though he wasn't just wanton destruction, these emotions would not afflict him with the silliness that overcame so many, it would not overrule his mind – he wouldn't let it. When Hannibal didn't say anything else and just looked at him expectantly, Will stood up awkwardly.

As Will redressed himself, Hannibal wandered to his cabinet and poured two glasses of whiskey, wondering whether he should explain. However he realised that anything he said would not shelter him from Will's ability to see deeper, to see the vulnerability that was Hannibal Lecter in love. With Will still unstable in his new form, he couldn't trust him with that knowledge, not when he had shown such a great capacity for manipulation and deceit. It was truly admirable, but with such turbulent control over these feelings, they were much too delicate to be exposed.

Returning to their chairs, Will was seated in a stunned silence, clearly confused by his refusal. Holding out a glass to him, he smiled when Will looked at him, bending down to kiss him briefly on the lips. Staring at him, Will seemed to come to some sort of understanding over what had just happened – though it was unlikely the truth. Calming the storm within

through the well-practiced discipline he lived by, Hannibal sighed as he took his seat, slipping a mouthful of vintage Dalmore.

"Now, what would you like to talk of today?"

*

Chapter End Notes

I also just wanted to clear something up. I know a lot of people have mixed feelings about Alana's character, but I actually really like her and kinda hate what I made her character into for the convenience of pushing this fanfiction in the direction I wanted. So fans of Alana, I truly do love our Queen, and whilst I tried to give her more depth, I have certainly not done her justice and for that I apologies.
My interpretation of Hannibal is a bag of dicks, as such, he's pretty critical of Alana, although it could be said that if Hannigram had happened like this fic, his perspective of Alana's necessity would have changed as well.

Anyway hope you guys like it - let me know what you think so I don't think you guys are still wondering why you're reading this trash!

Daijuushō

Chapter Notes

I'm back lovelies, thank you for being so patient with me. My travel in Japan is done and now I'm settling down into my year of exchange here (exciting but daunting).

I seem to have a tendency to write Will as both contradictory, confused and repetitious. As we've had no concrete affirmation as to what was going on in his head season 2 yet (I'm sure everyone is holding their breath just like me for season 3) Will's mind in this fic is a bit of a bag of cats. He really has no idea what he is doing and is so overwhelmed by how he is behaving, how he wants to be behaving, how he should be behaving, who he should be protecting, who he shouldn't be feeling so deeply for and most of all who's side he should be one and who's side he is on.

I especially love writing how messy his head space gets when he's around Hannibal. Hopefully I've delivered his confusing and repetitious rambling in a way that isn't too boring.
Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

Wolf Trap was surprisingly quiet, all creatures having yet to emerge from their homes into the cold. A warm touch to the wind signified the first hint of spring as it travelled over white fields to gently rustle barren branches together. The world gleamed as the light danced across the ground and trees, reflecting the illusion of a crystal surface, like that of a painting, frozen and untouched. The calm was pierced as Will's furry family poured out the front door of his little house in the middle of nowhere. Following after them Will smiled as they snuffled around, rooting about in the snow, stumbling against each other. Leaning over his porch railing he sighed and tried to let the serene normalcy fill him with its peace.

Juggling a late morning coffee he rubbed the sleep from his eyes feeling well rested, an unusually common occurrence as of late. And yet his mood was weighed down by a looming sense of boredom, or something akin to the restless emotion. Silence had always been his friend but now it had lost its isolating comfort. Instead an emptiness had crept into his gut filling him with an odd loneliness. It was a new sensation born from the absence of Hannibal's enigmatic presence from his side - yet it felt wrong to miss him. His life was, as it always had been, full of contradictions.

With Hannibal's patients and Will's classes, both had been detained by matters of the real world. The bubble around their game of seduction and murder had popped, forcing Will to return to a reality filled with habitual routine. What he had found in his solitude, was peace and boredom. He had gone to great lengths to fill his mind with Hannibal's psyche, allowing it to seduce and inspire his own. But without him, Will's mind all but rot, his world so utterly devoid, as though struck of colour.

His empathy had thrown him into the depths of Hannibal's psyche where he saw the world in a new light. But it hadn't been a conscious change. Somehow during their game his empathy had blinded him to the transformation going on beneath his awareness. Will closed his eyes and grimaced. Perhaps that was a delusion in itself. The lie he told himself as he allowed his affection for Hannibal to grow, the delusion of this 'separate self' nothing but an excuse for the delight he felt relinquishing control over the dark desires within. Desires that had evolved to parallel Hannibal's, developing far beyond his capabilities to reverse the changes, let alone ignore them.

Though it started with little changes; flairs and notions that were all his own, his behaviourism had taken full effect. Now, Will was overcome by impulses separate from Hannibal's psyche, generate from the comfort of his own mind, flowing from his conscious with as much ease as taking breath, and a pleasure that was a gentle as a kiss.

Hannibal was right; killing was changing the way he thought. For Will no longer simply possessed the innate capacity to enjoy murder, but anticipated it, desired it.

It should have made him uncomfortable, but the moral man within was slowly dwindling in presence, fading into a muted silence in the back of his mind. He may not have killed Freddie, but it had been nothing more than a spur of the moment decision, a potential he hadn't acted on. He had felt the driving thirst to kill her, to remove the filth of her uncouth and invasive behaviour, but his self-preservation was substantially higher than his curiosity. For the moment.

Now, as the barrier between the killer and the empath began to dissolve, the genuinity of what he felt for Hannibal had begun to obfuscate his plan of reckoning. He no longer knew with any clarity of what he wanted. Pulled this way and that by Jack's strings, he ironically felt that Hannibal had offered him the most control. Perhaps it came from the innate curiosity he possessed that simply allowed him to enjoy influencing life around him without adhering to a strict plan. Ever the indulgent lover of improvisation. A man without a master plan very rarely gambled with what he was wasn't prepared to lose, although it seemed Will was the exception to too many of Hannibal's principles.

And in the silence of Wolf Trap, Will found he missed the weight that was the mind of Hannibal Lecter within him, teaching him, guiding him, *loving* him.

The thought conjured the memory of Hannibal's hands, so deftly crafted for art, clasping him, embracing him, that stern but supple mouth bringing him to such a powerful release.

Feeling the blood rush to his cheeks he brought his coffee to his lips, allowing the aromatic scent to distract his thoughts from its sexual wanderings. Draining it down he was

surprised by the alert bark Winston gave beside him, claws clipping over the steps as he ran to greet the car rolling up the driveway. Recognising it as Jack's black SUV Will pinched the bridge of his nose, before whistling for his dogs. As they bounded towards him he heard the car come to a stop, momentarily warmed by the joyous expressions of his benevolent little family, their snout's dusted white by the snow, eyes bright with excitement. Opening the door he watched them pool inside, slipping over and around each other yipping eagerly as they went.

"Graham." Behind him Jack's voice was gruff. "We need to talk."

Sighing Will turned to face him, hands clasped around his empty mug. "I have nothing more to give you Jack…" His gaze drifted to the scarf secured tightly around Jack's neck and he could see it, see her. Mrs Crawford, her body frail, putrid as she slowly rotten from the inside looping the warm knit around his neck, but as its ruby colour stood brightly out against the darkness of his skin and their white surroundings all Will could think of was blood.

"It would seem Dr Lecter is beginning to reciprocate your efforts Will." Jack joined him on the balcony yet he maintained an unapproachable wall of distance between them.

Since he had known him, Jack had always seemed to observe him with a sense of concern, something to be handled with caution. But now, now he watched him with apprehension and Will knew, though he would never admit it - even to himself - part of him feared where Will's loyalties lay.

"Yet none of it is traceable."

There was a slip of accusation to his tone that Will ignored; too ambivalent to dignify it was a response. Sighing he turned his gaze away from the detective's penetrative scrutiny to look once more over the white expanse of nature around them, his mind drifting. Closing his eyes he saw before him the image of Shiva posed in that icy graveyard, formed from blackened flesh and reverence. Hannibal's 'reciprocation'. Here Jack was, wondering how long it would be till Will had evidence on Hannibal, how much longer he had to wait till he had him in custody. And all Will could think of was the pure homage Hannibal had paid him by arranging the corpse in such a way.

Will rubbed his eyes, trying to scrape away the treacherous emotions such praise awoke in him. "There is no evidence to find Jack, that's not how we're going to catch him."

"Exactly!" Jack took a step forward, finger raised. "It's through *you*, so why have your liaisons with Doctor Lecter stopped?"

"Liaisons?" Will frowned, disconcerted by the context such a word could carry. Surely Jack didn't know of the depth of Will's 'liaisons' with Hannibal?

"Alana Bloom seems to be dually concerned and fearful of the depth of your relationship with Hannibal." Those eyes were flinty as they waited for some kind of objection.

But Will couldn't truly object, not when everyone was right to fear their 'destructive relationship' as Alana had put it.

"I have appearances to maintain Jack." He said carefully to hide the guilt threatening to shake his voice.

"So you've told me."

There was a silence and Will sucked his teeth.

Jack sighed, his gloves creaking as the leather flexed. "I'm going take Alana to Freddie before her suspicions of you get out of hand."

Will raised an eyebrow. "Is it wise having Alana know? She holds a strong role in convincing Hannibal of my…transformation." He had given up a lot to maintain Alana's doubt, to have her fear him so vehemently. It had kept her safe, considering Hannibal's proclivity for taking away anyone who believed him, one way or another. Not to mention it was Alana's strength as a moral radar that made her a vital key to convincing Hannibal of Will's descent into his murderous urges.

The darker, secondary effect of having Alana believe in the worst of Will enabled him the freedom to explore his complex feelings for her. He loved her, this was true, but there was a deep seated urge to inflict violence upon her - for she was the enemy to the unreasonable creature within that wanted to possess the monster who knew him like no other. Even the most rational part of him envied her intimacy with Hannibal, for she was able to lavish in the best of him. Blinded she enjoyed the man he could be, the friend he had been to Will, his refinement, charm, and innate capacity to care for and love those who mattered to him. On reflection these qualities were all still apart of him, but they were tainted by his murderous secret. Yet Will's ability to be dissuaded by Hannibal's destructive nature had weakened substantially.

Jack drew up, shoulders squared like he was issuing a final command. "Its my opinion that leaving her in the dark is going to cause more complications, this way she's aware of the situation and can keep herself out of danger."

Will scoffed. "None of us can do that, not when it comes to Doctor Lecter." Especially not Alana. Perhaps it had been unwise of him to give her the gun, but he had thought only to protect her from the inevitable conclusion to this sick tragedy, regardless of who was the villain. But if she now knew of the plan, Hannibal would sense something; in fact she was most likely in a great amount of danger.

As was Margot. The news of her conception seemed to have triggered something in Hannibal and whatever it was; it had put Will on edge.

"Perhaps you're right. So it leads me to question why you aren't doing your job." His voice was level but tempered, roiling with a frustration he was trying so desperately to hold down. Jack was - as ever - transparent in his anger.

“We’ve maintained our sessions, but Hannibal has withdrawn from me, something has made him wary.” Once again Will saw Hannibal so open and undone beneath him, no deception, no game, just a raw sexuality, the mere memory of which never failed to leave Will in a state of arousal. Had that been it? Hannibal had work with such ambition to be a flawless version of himself, but in that moment he had offered so much with his flushed cheeks and swollen lips. Had he offered too much? Or too soon perhaps? With Will’s loyalties only newly tested Hannibal had the sense to be wary, but it knotted his insides up in a way that a ‘good’ man should not have felt for such a devil.

Jack’s fists clenched. “I won’t lose him, not again. We’ve put too much time and effort into this. We’ve lost…too much.”

It was as though Jack had heard his inner thoughts and Will couldn’t help but feel chided, looking to his hands he saw them tense around the mug and pretended not to see the blood staining them. “I know Jack, I know.”

“I need you to fix this, you fix it now. You’re all I’ve got Will.”

Jack left him then, standing in the cold and with a heavy sigh he looked to the sky, feeling its endless oblivion. He realised in that moment of quiet infinity that in the end, none of this would matter, and for that very reason it mattered so much. It had become clear that even away from Hannibal, Will’s newly acknowledged nature was one he could nurture safely within, passing through the world as normally as he needed. But that meant the only desire to give in to Hannibal was the weakness of his heart and mind – *not* the turbulent desperation of his darkness. So why then couldn’t he fall to Hannibal’s allure, the good man withering within be damned?

***

“It’s a courtship.”

Alana’s words circled his head flooding his system with a rush of endorphins as he recalled the sheer romantic gesture of Hannibal’s macabre display. A testimony of his affections and belief in Will, and yet Will was disconcerted by the lack of satisfaction he felt for the success of his deceit. Rather he was unsettled by regret. Not guilt – no. One did not trick the devil and feel guilty, and yet why the regret…?

This would have been so much easier if at least one of them had been heartless. The world and perhaps even Hannibal himself might believe that he was, at least sometimes, but Will knew him better than that now. Hannibal was a man who wanted to enlighten Will to his world, to be known by someone he could share the beauty and death he saw in it. And Will could no longer deny the possibility that he was that person, and yet he was exposing that attachment to drag the one person who truly knew him into confinement, perhaps even death. The incident in his office had proven that Hannibal was relinquishing control, to his own realisation or not, he was becoming vulnerable.

And with every enlightening glimpse into the truth of Hannibal Lecter, Will saw a startling emotional susceptibility that led him to act with genuinity as oppose to calculated abuse to further the plan. That wasn't to say he didn't abuse it altogether - after all he had learnt from Lecter himself - but he certainly ignored far too many chances to use Hannibal's devotion and passion to his advantage. Though it rendered him absent of conviction and doubtful of his decision to apprehend Hannibal, he certainly understood the nature of his empathy all the better.

He had come to understand Hannibal so completely, so empathetic to the point that though he was a killer who degraded his victims, Will could no longer see him as the monster, instead he had become entirely too human to him. Perhaps it was because Hannibal operated by a system of values that had become comprehensible to Will, the creature within him admiring his convictions. It was an assertion that came with the freedom to make choices, uninhibited by social constraints and so unlike anything Will had experienced.

Will had moved through life uncertainly, shying away from interpersonal relationships for the incapability of others to accept his iniquity. As a child his empathetic comprehension was limited to only the intense transfer of the emotion itself. Unable to understand the origin or reasons behind such reactions he had withdrawn, trying to shut out the vivid world of pain, elation and grief. As an adult, the world around him could not be silenced no matter how he learnt to decipher origin and reason. A madness of noise that had slowly been steering him to this unhinged path and with the inclusion of profiling the criminally insane – he was surprised he ever indulged the idea that he would survive this and emerge sane.

And yet there was an unforeseen clarity of character that indulging his violent urges had given him. For the first time, he could act on whim without hesitation and fear of rejection, as though he truly had an identity freed from the entanglement of past killers. Or was he just solely entangled by Hannibal? He may be a good fisherman, but he could not deny how his involvement with Hannibal, the intimacy of their closeness, both physically and psychologically was affecting his ability to distinguish between what he wanted and what Hannibal wanted. It had become both a blessing and a curse. At least now he could anticipate what Hannibal wanted from him – well, most of the time. Even with the insight he had gained on Hannibal, the man could behave so uncharacteristically human, to unsettling Will completely, clouding his path of 'reckoning'.

"Hello Will."

That voice was the smoothest saccharine as Hannibal's hands pulled his winter coat from his shoulders, fingers grazing gently at his collarbones. There was none of the formality that Will had sensed in their recent sessions tonight as he was guided to a seat by Hannibal's hardwood desk, a decanter of alcohol resting upon its polished surface.

"Straight to drink doctor? That seems a little unorthodox." He remarked, but none the less took the office seat.

"Perhaps."

Will's breath caught in his chest at the beguiling smile playing tricks over that complicated mouth, the way it softened the danger he knew lay beneath. It was his job to

notice the details that composed a crime, but never before had he been so drawn to the makeup of a person, the simple details that made up Hannibal Lecter. The exotic combination of his face held such refinement, commanded such power with his aquiline nose and high cheekbones. His was a face of haunted darkness, yet it held such a remarkable beauty as though carved from soft but twisted wood. Absent of his jacket, his vest was close fitting around the scarlet shirt, emphasising the breadth of his shoulders before cutting an narrow angle at his waist. The strength of his figure was startlingly impressive, even for one usually so aesthetically blind as Will, who now caught himself wondering how anyone could mistake that body for that of a psychiatrist's. The spider lines webbing from those taciturn eyes were in truth the only true indication of Hannibal's age, his body a finely tuned instrument of destruction.

"Have you seen Margot recently?" Hannibal inquired, lowering himself with a predatory grace into the chair behind the desk.

"No, no I haven't not." He replied evenly, cautious of Hannibal's reaction. Margot may be virtually a stranger, but she was more or less an innocent, one that carried his child and Will was not blind. The knowledge of his impending fatherhood had upset Hannibal, but he couldn't pinpoint how exactly. Was Hannibal simply preoccupied with a rather unbefitting mood of jealousy, or had Margot interfered in some way? Either way, Hannibal's mood did not bode well for Margot.

"You've been avoiding me." Will said pointedly, and almost smiled at the pale brow Hannibal raised in response.

Tilting his head, Hannibal leaned forward to fill two glasses with the decanter's amber liquid. "Our sessions have continued like normal."

"Yet you have been withdrawn."

"I have been wary."

Will did smile then, grateful for the honesty and Hannibal sighed deeply. "Is that what you wanted to hear?"

"Not particularly, but I was curious over why things had suddenly become so formal since our…liaison in this office." Leaning forward Will grasped one of the glasses of whiskey and took a measured sip, watching Hannibal closely as the liquid burned pleasantly down his throat.

There was a degree of discomfort to Hannibal's expression, noticeable only to one as well versed in his facial features as Will. The silence between them was heavy as those sanguine eyes regarded him with curiosity and calculation. Will knew what he was wondering. Surely the same questions he had asked himself. Whose side was Will on? No doubt Hannibal knew that Will's behaviour was fickle and changeable, perhaps he even had contingencies to ensure his safety against them. But that was the essence of their game, so it was something else. Perhaps it was the true cause of their distance, the warmth that had bled its way into Hannibal's eyes despite how desperately he had tried to hide it as he withdrew from him that day in the office, denying Will the chance to reciprocate.

Hannibal had once been so guarded with his emotions, so thoroughly in control, but now Will could see the intensity of his affection for him. It hid in the smile that stretched over his wolfish teeth, lurking within eyes so often cruel and in control. Sometimes Hannibal would catch himself, stiffening up he would withdraw back into the clinical doctor Will knew well, that almost reptilian man, who had *seemed* free of compassion and above everything. Yet recently that defence mechanism was failing him.

Looking down at his glass Will felt a smile tug at the corner of his lips. The good doctor would be rather upset to learn of his romantic transparency, and yet, it only made him all the more human, all the easier to love. Most likely Hannibal feared his own attachment, particularly the vulnerability he exposed by revealing its depth to Will. But the good doctor did not seem to realise that Will had already seen that card, he knew how deeply Hannibal cared, and it made it all the harder to do this to him.

"Have you ever been abroad Will?"

Will blinked, the change of topic surprising him, then again, Hannibal was always very good at deflecting. He would admit to nothing, and protect his vulnerability with every inch of his being.

"No, I saw a lot of America though. My father followed the work around the country, always trying to keep us above water. He was a good man."

"Was?" Hannibal sipped his glass, once more appearing calm and collected.

"He worked himself into the ground, died before I left New Orleans."

Again Hannibal tilted his head, as though observing a specimen. "And yet you allowed yourself to become broken by your work. Shame it was not so significant of a tragedy to steer you clear of the same path. Yet perhaps it was an event befitting of the transition into a new stage of life that led you here."

Will gritted his teeth, insulted by the callous inference. And anger always managed to make him rude. "Was Mischa your tragedy?"

Too say that Hannibal looked shocked was to insult his ability to mask his emotions, but his eyes were cold, dangerous in their warning and darker than Will had ever seen them. After a moment of silence, Hannibal took a long drink, perhaps the first sip of alcohol Will had seen him not savour.

"Yes." His answer was surprisingly soft in contrast to the coiled tension of his form.

"Did you kill her?"

The hand around the glass tightened before loosening and slipping away, Hannibal's face turning to look out the window at the twilight night scene. Will was transfixed by the town lights reflecting in Hannibal's eyes as he appeared transposed in another memory, another life. Inhaling deeply he licked his lips, turning his gaze once more to Will.

“She was… taken from me.”

In that moment Will saw more to Hannibal then he ever had, more than he ever expected he would see again. He saw the child, so vastly intelligent and frightening to all those around him grow into a youth of voiceless anger and disgust and then into this perfectly formed creature of destruction with hidden teeth that tore the useless apart. Hannibal Lecter was still all these things, but at his core he was human, a human that had suffered a great tragedy. A tragedy that had a name - Mischa Lecter.

“In return I took something from those responsible.” There was a serene, entirely unhinged way Hannibal said those words. Like a sour note in an orchestra and it rose the hairs on the back of Will’s neck and down his arms. He felt Hannibal’s vindication and was disturbed by it, but empathised with it all the same. He could feel the pleasure Hannibal was feeling, it was…euphoric, tainted only by the bittersweet feeling of loss, extreme and cruel loss.

Will could see it now, the original drive of Hannibal’s murderous pathology, despite his transcendence of its reckless grip. It was his evolution from revenge into a rather simple, even instinctive infernal desire to kill that had made him so hard to recognise, let alone catch. Only for Will had he risked exposure. The realisation of that played on Will’s mind as they sat there in silence, composure returning to Hannibal as he straightened up the objects on his table with a meticulous precision. Watching him fiddle about, Will found himself overcome with a wave of endearment, smiling at the way Hannibal’s brows furrowed in such a regular, human irritation.

Realising he was staring he quickly threw back the rest of his drink feeling conflicted. The longer they spent together the more Will uncovered about Hannibal, most of which endeared the man to him all the more.

In truth, Will’s commitment to the game had wavered to a point beyond return. He wanted to be a good man, he truly did, but when all that Hannibal offered felt so good – when the world had done its best to damage him so violently, why should he abide by a law and order that would only ruin him. Didn’t he deserve the chance to be in control, to act on whim and want? The chance to be treated not just as tool, isolated and considered so fearfully ‘other’. But did the chance of a life like that even lead to Hannibal? Perhaps it led to a house on the water somewhere warm, perhaps Florida, with his dogs and his boat engines.

Yet if his dreams were anything to go by, he would never truly be free of Hannibal Lecter.

In the time they had spent apart - as his world became mediocre in its absence of blood and horror - the macabre had once again found reflection in his dreams. No longer plagued by the terror that had accompanied the violence of his night time visions, what had once been nightmares had become comforting dreams of beautiful death, in which Hannibal played a starring role. Most nights he killed Hannibal in the most imaginative ways, that accented timbre instructing him on the pressure of his hands or the angle of his knife. Yet every morning he awoke with the desire to see Hannibal, to lingering in that enigmatic presence without an inkling of malicious intent.

But instead he found himself in a cold world, the reprieve from their slow paced dance leaving his reality starkly bleak. Was this what he had to look forward too? If Hannibal was imprisoned or worse, sentenced to death, he would be left to walk a lonely path with a psyche so attuned to Hannibal's infernal desires. He couldn't even recall the being he was before he had met Hannibal, that faint chaotic creature nothing more than an outlined memory.

Remaining delusional not an option - not anymore.

It had been a mistake indulging the darkness because it had truly become a part of him, the perfect partner to Hannibal's own monstrosity.

Recently he had been pursuing Hannibal as much out of obsession as Hannibal ever pursued him. He just didn't necessarily know to what end he should focus this obsession. And yet he could not escape the impending pressure to draw the game to a conclusion, forced by Jack's insistence. On reflection he realised it had always been Jack driving the game forward, at least since Randall Tier. To Will's fault he had grown compliant with the suppers and the playful banters he shared with Hannibal. In the end though, regardless of what he chose, Jack wouldn't stop in the hunt for Hannibal, nor would he let Will fall 'blindly' to the man. Regardless of what he decided to do, theirs would likely be an ending of blood, not tears as the aphorism suggested.

And perhaps that was the way it should be for Will was clearly broken to love and condone such a man.

Placing his cup down Will rose out of the chair and allowed his feet to lead him around the table, resisting the temptation to smile at the bemused expression on Hannibal's face. Drawing closer he raised a hand to cup that broad jaw, grazing his palm over the hint of coarse evening stubble before he leaned down. Mellow and warm to the touch, Hannibal was compliant as Will tilted his head up, breath hitching just a second before he drew their lips together.

The kiss was sweet and gentle, a first amongst their many others, and yet no less breath-taking. Neither led nor controlled the kiss, moving together in a simple rhythm, lips pressed firmly against each other, tongues touching almost chastely. Beneath him Hannibal's mouth curved into a smile and feeling the pleasure of it infect him Will nipped at his protruding upper lip, relishing the soft sigh he produced.

Drawing back he saw Hannibal's eyes were closed, lips now stretch in a grin and felt a little weak at the knees knowing that he had caused him to display such a genuine expression.

"I think that's all for tonight doctor." Will murmured, a hairs breath from that enticing mouth before straightening up.

Joining him on his feet, Hannibal caught him by the waist, a warm, docile look in his eyes as he cradled his cheek, fingers winding absentmindedly through a stray curl. "Did you know Will, the origin of passion was to suffer."

"You've made me suffer." Will stated without accusation.

Nodding, Hannibal leaned forward, brushing their lips together. “As you have made me. Yet Nietzsche says ‘To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering.”

Kissing him once more Hannibal released him, a gentle smile on his face. Coughing lightly, Will willed his blush away as collected his things, aware that Hannibal continued to watch him, head cocked in an owlish curiosity - as though he could not entirely fathom the creature before him. Slipping his jacket on Will tried to draw his eyes away from the tenderness in that expression lest he never leave the room. At a soft exhalation Will turned back to see Hannibal looking once more out the window. “I expect there shall be more suffering to come. For all who are involved.”

Something in the way Hannibal said this made Will want to stay, to chase away the note of melancholy from his voice. Instead he opened the door.

“Good night Hannibal.”

He did not receive a reply, yet in that moment he was transfixed as the moon’s iridescent rays flittered through the windows to cast Hannibal in a bewitching glow. It did not enrich him. He did not glitter like some ethereal romantic character – rather, he was drained of colour; shadows forming beneath his brow hollowing out his eyes. His skin was a sickly white in contrast to his scarlet shirt, like all his blood had bled out through the coiled ruby tie around his neck.

He looked dead.

“Good night dear Will.”

Swallowing deeply Will fled the room. Was he prepared to be the death of this man?

***

Chapter End Notes

I really like the idea of Will seeing blood and death everywhere as though the universe is warning him of whats to come - a predicator/seer in almost a kind of Cassandra and Troy way.

Anyway I love vulnerable Hannibal (only around Will) and I know some fans see him as this strong, unbreakable alpha kind of character, but I really don't see him that way. Canonically he isn't this vulnerable, but I think if they had been romantically inclined as was my entire intention of exploring in this story, I think we would have seen a lot of vulnerable confliction in the character.

I know that's not everyone's cup of tea, but it is certainly mine (get out while you can! For here there be monsters)

Also, while I know this may upset some of you, I am considering including a one time bottom!Hannibal, but I will tag it should I decide to include it and warn readers of the tag up date. I'll even separate scene it with a warning if you want to continue reading but would like to skip it. I've truly been agonising over this for months since I agreed not to do it, because for me it feels appropriate to include suiting the build up in the story so far. But I understand if some of you pull out because of this and I'm truly sorry to go back on my word.
Elliearna

Daijuuichishō

Chapter Notes

Hey everyone, sorry to be so slow again. But Japan is amazing and I'm introducing all my friends to Hannibal - is anyone else at that stage where all they do (can do) is talk about Hannibal - or Mads on motorcycles for that matter, oh my god yum.

Anyway the upcoming chapters are going to be a bit more Will-focused so I wanted another glimpse at Hannibal's feelings and how he perceives the situation. Also, my first big divergence from canon plot with the my Hannibloom situation!

Enjoy guys!
Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Hope not ever to see Heaven. I have come to lead you to the other shore; into eternal darkness; into fire and into ice."

– Dante Alighieri.

*

The aroma of butter perforated the room as he dropped the artichoke hearts into the pan. As the flesh began to cook a sizzling sound could be heard, almost musical Hannibal was inclined to hum, yet was hesitant to wake his guest. With so much to do, he had yet to decide what was best to say. Adding some oregano and mushrooms into the pan he left them to sauté, manoeuvring about the kitchen with ease. Giving in to the urge he began to hum a simple waltz as he rinsed some dishes before turning to check on the boudin rouge sausage. Simmering in low water they were cooking at a perfect rate, though he frowned at the layer of oil gathering on the surface. For an art curator with a misogynistic disdain for female artists and any oil-based works - views he voiced all too publicly - he was certainly producing a surprising amount of grease.

He had prepared the sausage with the intention of offering it to Will, a gift of home with its Louisianan Cajun origins. Yet it was not Will he served but Alana; a final supper of sorts as their chapter finally drew to its conclusion. He would not deny the enjoyment he had experienced with her, for despite the holes in the stitches of their relationship, she had been a

pleasure. After all, indulgence in all things pleasurable was the true vice of Hannibal ‘s nature. For that gift, he would not be cruel. Holding up the knife he contemplated its gleaming surface, mind weighted by indecision.

She posed but minimal threat even with the change in her behaviour, the bouts of paranoia and suspicion. He felt it accumulate, pieces sliding into place, the last falling when she avoided him for days - until last night. He knew then that it was time. Admittedly he had expected the conversation to occur last night, assaulted with her tears and accusation, yet she had surprised him. Arriving after dinner she had led him to bed, seeking his silent compliance as she undressed him and stole sweet, seemingly forbidden kisses. She lay down with him, devoid of sexual interest, desiring only the chance to gaze upon him, as though this was the first time she had seen him. Her hands had wandered with the gentlest touch to trace the contours of his face, content to learn the shape of his collarbones and map the blemishes across his skin.

He had found the experience…puzzling.

Come morning he was faced with many questions, answers to which garnered different reactions and conversations. How much Alana suspected was truly a mystery, for her behaviour could ultimately be result of various revelations. Was it his adultery or his true nature, or perhaps both? Whilst her acquirement of a gun led to the latter, her ability to sleep by his side indicated the first. Or perhaps she was broken, like many of his toys - just not in a way that suited him.

He contemplated the eggs now poaching in a shallow pan. He was prepared for the inevitable, but killing her truly did him no favours. It would be superfluous, unlikely to satisfy even the part of him that had grown tired of her more irritating actions - particularly her inconvenient timing.

In all honesty, to kill her would likely inconvenience him, accelerating the pace of the game in ways he could not control, damaging the solid tracks he had laid out for Mason’s demise. Will had reacted so beautifully to the sight of Margot helpless and broken in that hospital bed and, yet he had managed to surprise. With charming deception and curiosity Will had placed a noose around Hannibal’s neck, a rather impressive feat. Though now Mason was more dangerous than ever, and perhaps so was Will.

After all, someone had given the gun to Alana.

Arranging the meal, he spooned bechemel sauce over the top, before adding a pinch of parmesan cheese and placing it under the grill. Selecting a random track of classical music, Chopin lofted out of the speakers. The melancholic tone was well tuned to the nostalgic feelings arresting him as he leaned against the counter, hands clasping a large cup of coffee. Though a master at handling his tableware with poise and grace, sometimes he indulged the childish desire to curl around the heat - if only in memory of chubby pink hands clutching a mug of hot water to ease the starving cold. He took large mouthful of the hot liquid, hoping to burn away the bitter ache the memory left in his wake. Nostalgia was a cruel, but a valuable reminder of lost opportunities and mistakes, an etching of the moment when a choice took weight and became reality in memory and time.

Sighing he put the cup down, staring into the dark liquid and thought - as he so often did in solitude - of Will. What was he doing now? Will had taken to visiting Margot in the hospital without him, a slight that reveal his contempt for what Hannibal had done. But he could have his retaliation, for Hannibal's misdeeds would far outgrow Will Graham's ability to ever truly *hate* him. In the meantime, Will seemed content to pull strings that endangered Hannibal. Yet in these actions of revenge and curiosity, Hannibal saw predatory calculation and a raw predilection for manipulation that only continued to draw them closer. This true actualisation of all Will's hidden pleasures was most certainly the finest discovery of identity he had ever witnessed.

The exposure of Will's powerfully vivid imagination in particular was phenomenal - even though Hannibal was the sole victim in his violent imaginings. It was a role he perhaps invited upon himself when he asked Will to visualise what he would like to happen in this game with Mason, for Will had likely imagined Hannibal's demise yet again. However in return Hannibal had pictured how Will would kill Mason - blood coating those calloused hands as he broke Mason's face before throwing him into that pig pen to be torn apart. Sheer brutality was not Hannibal's style, but the thought of Will so calm as he fought with such raw violence excited Hannibal, surprisingly so.

Still, though Will was far surpassing Hannibal's expectation, persuading him to kill Mason may prove too difficult. Nevertheless, perhaps Hannibal could return a little life to Margot by exacting a different kind of *behavioural* reprimand on Mason.

"Hannibal?"

Pulled from thought, Hannibal cast Alana a smile as she wandered into the kitchen, moving easily about as she made herself a cup of coffee. "Good morning." He said fondly, thoughts becoming sentimental, weighted by the impending knowledge of what was to come next. He would certainly miss her, this he could not deny. It was the closest he had ever come to understanding what it was to live a normal life, perhaps the kind pictured for him by his mother.

Looking at her he contemplated how to begin, before the chime of the oven reminded him that breakfast was not an affair to be missed. Sitting at the table, the soft pads of Alana's feet tapped a low rhythm as they ate and Hannibal continued to feel the shadow of sentimentality. He could no longer envision how he would display her, what joy he would take from arranging her. After all, she was one of his finest walking pieces of art.

Cutting into the soft flesh of the sausage they enjoyed light conversation but amidst it was something unsanctioned in the picturesque scene they made. It was in the slight pause before her first bite of sausage, the darkness that shadowed her normally bright eyes as though struck by this indecision of what was real and what was a dream.

He cocked his head. She knew.

And yet he still didn't want to kill her. Without confirmation of her fears she was harmless unless provoked, alas his decision was based on a degree of hedonism. She had been a pleasure to nurture, a testimony to his ability to befriend and share so much, yet slip

unseen. She was a relic of his past before Will, before he found someone worthy of truly knowing him.

Though aesthetically it was more than that; her true appeal - what made her beautiful, what made her art - was her life. How she lived and breathed, was the reminder of the potential man had for great life, and in time great death, yet this was not the time for hers. Not when it when he was so uncommitted to it, he would not cheat her of that. Should she die by his hands, it would be earned not passionless and …vulgar. He owed her more than that – his perfect human.

Nevertheless, this was still an end of sorts.

With the dishes cleaned and put away, he folded the tea towel and placed it on the counter, turning to face her. Pausing a moment he smoothed down his apron. “I think we should end this.”

Her eyes flicked up to hold his intently, yet she did not appear surprised, only confirming his suspicions. Taking a deep breath she folded her arms. “Why?” She blinked, brows furrowed, something turbulent playing beneath her voice.

“This is no longer fulfilling, it isn’t sustainable.” He adopted a morose expression, allowing the sentimentality he felt to pour through.

Levelling him with a disparaging look Alana remained silent.

Ah…unfortunate.

To steer this to its correct, clean conclusion he needed to pull Alana away from her icy calm towards passion. Lowering his shoulders, he dipped his head and strands of hair fell across his face. “This is not working for either of us.” His voice was gentle, pacifistic. “I feel this is no longer what it set out to be.”

“And what was that exactly?” She demanded, eyes sharp.

He tilted his head, dispelling the submissive farce to shrug slightly with his mouth. “Indulgence and solidarity—.”

“—It was a relationship!” She bit back.

He inclined his head, the reality of that undeniable. “To some extent, but it was a means to filling a void.”

Alana looked as though she had swallowed something unpleasant. “What void exactly?”

He sighed and took small steps around the counter, keen eyes trained to the way her foot slipped back a step, throwing bobbing unconsciously. “You lost Will. We both lost him, each feeling as though we failed him.” Smiling gently, he placed a hand on her shoulder, rooting her to the spot. “You loved him, as did I.”

Though she had grown quiet as he spoke, his last words left her glaring bitterly. “Perhaps, but at least I wasn’t *using* you.” She spat.

Raising an eyebrow he smiled sadly. “Alana,” he cupped her face, peering into her eyes. “You are amongst the smartest of individuals I have met, so please don’t delude yourself. You lost Will too - this was mutual. The only difference here is Will returned to me.”

Perhaps it was rude to indulge the pride that warmed his smile into something ill-suited for the sensitivity needed to placate Alana. Granted there was a specific pleasure he gained from indulging his sycophantic, perhaps even vindictive side to her, although not enough to compromise himself.

“But you wanted him all along.” Alana’s voice was small, her eyes moistening.

Seeing her pain, he brushed his thumbs down the soft curve of her cheeks in an apology that was devoid of shame. “But you never really wanted me.” He reasoned, closing his eyes as she opened her mouth to object. “You wanted stability, the chance to be mature, and you realised your indulgence with instability nearly cost you that chance.”

Alana frowned.

“My permanency in your life was jeopardized - you saw me nearly die. That affected you. I’ve been the one consist thing in your life and you nearly lost it.” Releasing her he watched her process, lips pursing as she found no lie to his words.

Swallowing deeply she looked at him with uncertain eyes. “And now I am going to lose you anyway.”

He nodded.

“But I don’t even know if you’re even the same man I feared losing, if you ever really were that man.” She searched his eyes, trying to find something. Receiving nothing but his patient stare she raised her arms to cradle herself. “What are you doing Hannibal? What are you playing?”

Cocking his head he watched her carefully, curious what answer it was that she was hoping for. It became apparent that it was not an answer she wanted but rather the denial of her need for one and a confession of mere whims. Whatever she had been told to suspect, she wished avidly that it was not true, that the subtle mechanisms moving around her were not part of his evil master plan. To some extent this was true, for he disliked plans greatly. Despite his meticulous temperament, he was too highly versed in the unexpected nature of life and humanity to believe in the practicality of plans. Instead he was led by the spontaneity of opportunity and failure to regard every step taken as a challenge, an innate curiosity. Should he be caught one day, jail would be naught but a challenge, his time as a robin in the cage.

“Honestly, I thought each of us were using the other as a substitute for what we could not have, and perhaps cruelly so, that is no longer necessary.” This was the last insult he

needed to evoke the right kind of anger and misery from Alana. It was the kind that would pull her far away from him and hold her there, curiosity at bay until he was long gone from America, Will by his side and their daughter in tow.

"But your friendship is still valued." He had chosen the line with the expectation that its allusion to the cliché would irritate Alana, yet he was surprised by the honesty with which he delivered it. This dismissal as cruel as it was, was the best alternative he could offer her all things considered.

Gritting her teeth, Alana turned away from him, pressing her fist to her mouth. With a light hitch she coughed and drew herself up straight, leaving the room without another word. She was gone for only a moment, giving him time to remove his apron and make his way to the hall.

Walking down the steps, she pulled her hair out from underneath the collar of her jacket. Coming to stand before him, she purposefully positioned her body to face away from him, defensive and closed off. Chest heaving, her hands clenched quickly into fists and he raised his eyebrows in surprise. Yet she did not hit him. Instead she turned to him once more and gripped his face. "I loved you."

Searching his eyes one last time, she released and pushed passed him, footsteps echoing down the hall and out the entrance. As the door slammed shut, the house was flooded in silence and he sighed.

It was a shame that Alana was not corruptible for she was undoubtedly in love with him, yet her sensibilities could not be converted or enlightened to the world as with Will and Abigail. There was no place for her in their family. But…he would miss her.

Hearing a creak from upstairs he hummed a low tune as he returned to the kitchen to pull together a third meal. Light feet made their way down the stairs before a tentative voice called out. "What's for breakfast d-dad?"

Sharp sanguine eyes met wide peerless blue and Hannibal smiled.

"Curator sausage."

***

Will's unpredictable nature had always fascinated him.

He could appreciate it, even from here, the straps around his waist substantially too tight. A mistake on Mason's part if he wanted to bleed him; one needed to restrain their victim correctly to ensure complete blood flow. The bands cut in at his waist, the pressure of the harness forcing his neck at an uncomfortable angle, gravity propelling his body to turn in slow circles. It had taken him a moment to recognise Will as he walked into view, but once he

had, he could not take his eyes from him. He stood poised, separate from Mason and his rabble, blue eyes devoid of any interest in the senseless idiocy pouring from Mason's mouth. Uncultured there was no elegance to Mason's murder, any artistry ruined by his rambling, like peacock preening over dull feathers.

Turning him away from Will, Mason loomed in front of him, the deranged soul practically begging for his attention. "You are an odd psychiatrist, we could have had some good, funny times together. It's a damn shame!"

Toying with the blade placed in his grasp Will was seemingly transfixed as he drank up the sight of him, enamoured with the image of him helpless and restrained, so completely beyond escape and entirely at his mercy. The power felt in this arrangement was one Hannibal knew all too well, but he held no immediate control over this moment. It was only his influence of the past that could have effect and yet the mere thought that Will was so captivated by *his* vulnerability left his body thrumming with anticipation. Perhaps he should feel fear, but he was too elated by the cold predatory ambience emitting from Will to be concerned over his fate.

He could easily influence the other; but there was always the possibility for human error in all of his plans. Will may have very well decided that killing Hannibal was what he wanted. Yet that possibility only thrilled him. There was an electric quality to the dark look residing in Will's eyes, the thirst of a predator. It drew him into a cruel blue embrace, his world consisting of only Will, knife in hand as he dangled powerless before him.

As Will lunged forward, placing the knife to his throat, Hannibal gazed serenely down at him. Was everything living up to Will's expectation? He had surely imagined this staged, performed and acted in so many different ways – was it all that he had hoped?

Hannibal felt a deep intimacy as Will pressed the cold blade slightly harder against his soft flesh; filled with the need to expose the place further in submission and acceptance. Perhaps this was because he neither feared his death nor expected it. Hannibal knew where Will's loneliness lay. The part of him that had waited to be acknowledged and understood, that loneliness would always tell Will not to do this, not to sacrifice something so unique.

But Hannibal didn't count on it.

That would only limit Will's ability to transcend his nature, but by now he must realise how comfortable this skin felt. They had each given each other a great gift, for that reason they would never be entirely separate from each other. Yet Hannibal was almost anxious to feel the white hot fire as Will pierced his flesh with the knife. Even as Mason tried to rein Will back, Hannibal experienced a near erotic stimulation as he anticipated his death by his beloved's hands.

Regardless of the result of this experiment with Will and Mason, it had been none the less, *fascinating*.

As though blue eyes returned to look at him, Hannibal realised Will planned to strike out as his body pulled back in anticipation of a lunge, hand tightening around the blade. A rush of air filled his lungs as Will spun him around, the blade cutting through the harness to

drop him to the floor. In that moment of freedom Hannibal knew what he felt was real and for the first time he no longer feared it. What existed between them was real, it was violent, cruel and consuming, but it was true. He loved Will Graham, just as Will Graham loved him.

Propelled forward, he gained his feet, turning just as Carlo struck Will down.

An signature element to his killings was his control and lack of rage; such an emotion soured the ritual of crafting art from blood and bone. But as he watched Will crumple to the ground, a surge of adrenaline assaulted his heart and he dashed forward, grasping the knife from Will's lax grip to plunge it deep in Carlo's leg - just like his partner's. As the man sunk to his knees Hannibal took but a second to snarl down at him in promise for even daring to harm Will.

Turning to face Mason's other henchman, he noted a new man had arrived and was attempting to load his gun whilst Mason cowered behind him. Casting a fearful glance at where Carlo now lay incapacitated, the other henchman flexed his grip around his knife before charging towards him. Blocking the assault with ease, Hannibal snapped the man's fingers, relishing his cry of pain, before he retrieved the knife and slashed his jugular. Blood spurted from the wound, arterial spray flying into Hannibal's face and he grinned.

Moving quickly he was upon Mason, striking the last man before he had the opportunity to line up a shot, though he did fire uselessly around him. Disarming him, Hannibal kicked out to the side, the man's scream accompanying the sound of his knee fracturing as he dropped down. Snapping his neck he heard Mason begin to laugh, its madden hysteria ringing in his ear with discord.

Sneering Hannibal caught him in a head lock, forearm secured against his throat as he tried to render him unconscious as quickly as possible - if only to put an end to that horrendous noise. Eventually he went limp, legs folding beneath him, head hitting the ground with a resounding crack. Straightening up Hannibal took a deep breath before releasing it with a smile. Though slightly hazy from the head wound he suffered, Hannibal was nevertheless exhilarated by his kills. Surveying the damage he pouted, hands itching to carve something of interest from the pieces around him, alas he had neither the time nor tools. Nor were they worthy of the time, not when he had a great many decisions to make for the future of Mason Verger.

But first.

Leaving the bodies on the ground, he heard Carlo snivelling in the corner, struggling to regain his feet. "Hush now, I'll get to you soon."

Circling around Will's prone body, he crouched by his head, fingertips pressed to check his pulse. The weight of concern sitting in his stomach subsided at the steady thrum of blood pulsing beneath his fingers and cradling his head, Hannibal rolled Will into a more comfortable position. Running his hand down the side of his face, he brushed aside his curls, pausing in concern for the ashen pallor of his skin. Threading his fingers through those locks Hannibal searched for the wound, clinical in his assessment to ascertain the severity of the bleeding. The sickly tone to Will's skin indicated substantial blood loss, deadly only if it had yet to stop.

Discovering the sticky liquid, Hannibal was satisfied to note the blood was congealing as it began to seal up the wound. Laying Will's head down gently, Hannibal's eyes traced that pale face in wonderment. This beautiful creature who had once - and perhaps occasionally - despised him had willing protected him and thrown away the chance for perfect revenge. So much unacted on, and for what?

Hannibal was overcome by a hunger unlike anything he had ever felt - a want to split Will's skin, part his rib cage and climb within him just to be as close to his heart was possible. Minds had always been the mechanism of humanity that Hannibal understood, the heart a fickle thing that was too potent in its want. He had always acted with calculation, his heart's whims silenced to the logic of his experience and knowledge, so unlike Will who led a life in tragedy thanks to the warmth and whims of his own.

But Hannibal wanted it - he wanted to consume and possess Will's heart, to cradle it live and beating against his own. His and his alone.

Gazing at him, Hannibal trailed a bloody finger over the pout of Will's bottom lip, leaving a shock of red against the white pallor. It seemed perverted to feel such a thrill in his system at such a sight but he had resigned himself to the changes Will had created within him. With a groan he leaned down to kiss those cold lips, licking the evidence from them, savouring the metallic taste. He closed his eyes in enjoyment before collecting himself, for Will would wake soon, and there was much Hannibal had to do.

Standing up he turned to Carlo, stretching his neck leisurely before giving him a broad smile.

"Shall we?"

*

Chapter End Notes

Hope you guys liked it and I would love to hear what you guys think! I always have these bouts of concern over whether the story is getting boring, to unrealistic yada yada yada, so I would love to hear from you, suggestions, critic, anything you'd love to see etc. It always gives me good ideas and inspires me for dialogue and helps me edit, so please I'd love to hear from you guys!

Thanks for reading luvs
Elliearna

Daijuunishō

Chapter Notes

> Others have done this scene/moment in different ways, so I thought I'd change it up a bit, also wanted to see what it was like writing from someone who was 'viewing' the Hannigram relationship. I'm pretty happy with how it turned out though!
> Ah, Hannibal is so smitten everyone can see it!
> Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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A lone car drove the windy rural road, highbeams playing across the barren trees of Wolf Trap to cast shadows up the hill rise. Gripping the wheel tight, Margot tried to ignore the pit forming in her stomach, apprehensive to what exactly she was going to find at Will Graham's house. For what her brother had done to her, she wished him a fate worse than death. And yet, despite the despicable creature he was she could not kill him herself. On reflection, with the loss of her chance for a child, she needed him, too accustomed to her life of luxury. That aside she was not prepared to see the Verger name go to waste just because her father was a bigot. If she were to have any part in the Verger future, she needed Mason alive.

But the chance of that might already be lost, lifeless at the end of this road.

Doctor Lecter's voice had been calm when he called her, though she detected an element of cheer to his tone, the sort of chirpiness that never came from one in Mason's company. For that she could only conclude that Lecter had proved as dangerous as she had begun to suspect. She couldn't trust him, nor Will for that matter. Theirs was a singular relationship unlike anything she had witnessed and exceptionally hard to follow, its boundaries entirely undiscernible. If she had not suspected Lecter of possessing a sexless superiority complex, she would think they were fucking.

Regardless, it was of little concern to her. Her only interest was in Mason, and what Doctor Lecter had done to him.

She had sensed Lecter's ministrations around and beneath her plans, sensed him influencing and interfering with what she wanted. However in return she had come to realise she had disrupted something Lecter considered almost *sacred*. She had met predators in her life, but Lecter was a cut above the rest, perfect in his assimilation into society, compliant

only in the most necessary ways, yet indulgent and powerfully in control of every situation. Mostly.

Pulling up the driveway she flexed her gloved hands, surveying the house. Surrounded by white it stood in complete night, windows dark, looking almost haunted in the dim illumination of the moon light. It was so well suited to the person she had come to know as Will Graham, solitary and vulnerable, and yet there was a dark hidden facet to him that he kept shielded underneath his bitter, socially awkward exterior. In rare moments she caught a glimpse of both warmth and danger. Perhaps the danger in Will had cost her brother her life; after all she was at his house. Releasing the breath she had been holding onto, she looked once more to the seemingly ordinary house, wondering what horrors she may encounter within.

With the conclusion of tonight she swore never to get involved in the lives of Hannibal Lecter and Will Graham any more if she valued her life.

Bracing herself, she left her car unlocked as a precaution, keys heavy in her pocket as she made her way to the front door. Shifting her weight between her feet she hesitated reaching out for the door handle, attention caught by the muffled voices within. As a Verger she was usually quite confident when entering a building, yet apprehension had turned her stomach to stone, fearful of discovering what happened to her brother - possibly at the hands of a man who had 'helped' orchestra the removal of her foetus. She knew Lecter had a hand in it, she wasn't an idiot. Mason could barely recognise anything other than pigs and children; no, he had been guided.

Weighing her options she took caution, easing the door open only to see darkness, spare rays of moon light casting some of the room in a poor light.

"Welcome Margot."

A bone deep chill travelled through her, raising the hairs on her arms as Lecter emerged from the shadows, dishevelled appearance twisting her stomach into knots. Grinning in the dim light, his wolfish teeth were like something from a Grimm fairy-tale, a thin streak of blood trailing down his cheekbone. Yet, ominous and terrifying Hannibal Lecter had never looked more in his element, the roguish imperfections becoming him, making him appear youthful – at her brother's expense.

"Where is Mason?" She straightened up, after all there was a chance this was a trap. Around Lecter she had always maintained a semblance of her guard, yet she had failed to consider she may *truly* be in danger from the humanlike-creature that was her psychiatrist.

"He's over in my chair." Came a voice from within the dark and Lecter's eyes softened as he cast a look in its direction. Turning back to Margot, he inclined his head, hand held out in a mock gesture before he strolled over towards the fireplace.

Looking into the darkness, Margot's eyes began to adjust and she was able to make out Will's figure leaning impassively against the wall. "Follow him Margot." He said, voice level and apathetic.

Her eyes shifted to where Lecter stood poised, a serene smile on his face as he waited for her, hands clasped before him. Trailing after him she watched as he moved effortlessly around Will's house in complete ease with his surroundings, Will himself a silent and surprisingly disconcerting observer. She had been sure she understood who held the power between them, and yet Doctor Lecter seemed almost, smitten, Will instructing him like a conductor to the whole affair. It was slowly becoming clear as she followed Lecter that her brother was most likely dead, but by who's hand - it was impossible to tell.

"Watch your feet." Lecter warned, hand caressing the bloody muzzle of a large collie as it pressed dotingly against him.

Scanning the rest of the pack, her throat stuck together and she struggled to swallow the lump that had formed there. Her heart rate crept up as she absorbed the details she could see but everything was drowned in red. God there was so much blood. She felt caged, almost claustrophobic; Hannibal's smile jarring against the sea of red around them leaving her to swim through the odd dynamic that was the pair's strange relationship. She had made her assessments of both Lecter and Will, registering Hannibal as exceedingly dangerous, but in Will she had sensed an ally of sorts - but now it was clear she had underestimated his potential as Lecter's ally.

Pulled from her confusion she inhaled sharply at the appearance of her brother. Neck twisted at an unnatural angle, blood drenching the front of his shirt where it seeped from the raw flesh around his mouth.

"Is he dead?"

Again Doctor Lecter smiled. "No, dear Margot, but he is incapacitated beyond some repair."

"I can see that." She couldn't keep the anger from her voice, yet those keen sanguine eyes were unperturbed as they surveyed her, brightening as Will pushed off the wall to stand beside her.

"Its not wise to be rude around him Margot." He cautioned, before looking to where Hannibal stood, both sharing a private smile.

She fought to get her bearings around them, their unsettling and carefree manner weighing her down with a stifling tension. It left her feeling as though she were prey on the verge of being devoured, her tongue thick and parched in her mouth.

One of the smaller dogs whined at their feet and Will sighed, before moving into the kitchen leaving them frozen in an incomplete moment. She and Hannibal stood in silence, her brother sprawled in the armchair like a murder victim as the house filled with the dim rhythm of a kettle beginning to boil.

"Tea please." Lecter called over his shoulder before bending over her brother's body as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

“You made a mess of my dogs, you can wait.” Will chided as he entered the room and Margot almost choked at the playful jut of Hannibal’s lip, his behaviour sickeningly normal, even *domestic*.

Fixating on Will, Lecter’s eyes were tender as he walked past her to crowd close against him, far too close to be considered impersonal. Leaning into Will’s side their shared gaze was so intense, uncomfortable even, so displaced from the macabre scene with its romantic implication. At the subtle quirk of Will’s smile in response to whispered words from Hannibal, Margot’s eyes widened, all the pieces falling into place. It was not mere implication, they were most certainly intimate.

Lecter’s previously cold behaviour made far more sense now, for though he had hid it well, she read the distaste he had for her conceiving Will’s child. Even the bright, ill-placed warmth to his character now indicated his infatuation; he seemed unable to keep his eyes from Will. This revelation held more danger for her, their intimacy increasing the likelihood that Will was Hannibal’s ally, the unhinged and disjointed atmosphere caused by a madness of two. And she did truly believe Doctor Lecter deranged. She hadn’t, before arriving here, but the chirpy detachment with which he moved and acted about the house, as though it was nothing but a grand performance was not a sign of sanity but sickness. One shared by Will.

She had to get out of there.

Placing his hands flat to Will’s throat, Lecter tilted his head to the side, leaning closer to inspect what appeared to be blood running down from Will’s temple. When Lecter hummed in discontent Will pulled the hand from his face, mumbling a hushed placation in reply. Lecter murmured back and though Will’s brows furrowed, Margot watched the way his fingers lingered around Lecter’s wrist, thumb grazing his pulse.

Perhaps the affection Lecter harboured for Will was returned in full. Recalling her night with Will it became clear that she should count herself lucky to survive the pair considering her intrusions.

As the kettle rung out in completion, Will coughed and straightened up. “Margot won’t be able to get him out of the house by herself, help her, I’ll see to the dogs.” With that he pulled away from Hannibal, leaving her psychiatrist to turn to her with a mildly disgruntled expression.

Wasting no time, Lecter took hold of Mason’s upper body, nursing his head strategically before looking to her. “His legs if you please.”

Bending down to grasp her brother’s thighs, she felt something slip from her pocket and cursed, too unwilling to push Lecter’s patience to stop. Lecter rotated them to lead and she was surprised by the ease with which they manoeuvred Mason’s body from the house, Hannibal supporting most of the weight with little strain. She would be impressed were she not suddenly aware of the profound and unavoidable realisation that he had done this before.

Worse yet, Hannibal had to know the assumptions she was making – how could he be comfortable with her possessing such knowledge?

Arranging Mason into the back seat, Margot cautiously observed Lecter over the roof of the car as he swept the strands of hair from his eyes.

“This, I believe, will mark the end of your therapy Margot.” Inclining his head, sanguine depths contemplated her, that predatory gaze sending a chill across her skin. Voice catching in her throat she nodded, watching warily as Lecter measured his steps to bring himself before her. “Take care now.” He said with a genuinity that surprised her.

“Good bye Doctor Lecter.”

The corner of his mouth lifted to form a satisfied smile as he bide her farewell before returning once more inside the house. Calmly slipping into the driver’s seat, she manually pushed down the lock, the automatic system sending the rest of the car into lockdown. Finally safe she released the great lungful of air slowly choking her. Resting her head again the steering wheel her chest heaved, heart thrumming in her ears. It wasn’t fear she felt, rather, the raw survivalist instinct to flee the heavy stench of danger. Granted Hannibal and Will had been courteous all things considered.

Looking in the back mirror she saw her brother’s body curled on the back seat, head lying in a pool of blood and sighed in shame for the leather. Her brother needed her attention or more specifically medical attention, yet it would be so easy to throw him from the car and leave him to die in the cold. She smirked. That turn of events would likely appeal to Lecter.

Sighing she reached into her pocket and froze. “The fucking keys.” She cursed, looking out the window to the house in the distance.

She had no other choice but to go inside.

Taking a deep breath she dragged herself from the car back to the house. Tentative of the creaky floorboard by the door, she eased it open for the second time tonight. Peering into the darkness, she was met with silence, clean furred faces looking quizzically at her from before the fireplace. Slipping into the house she manoeuvred her way around the dogs, kneeling down to run her hands over the carpet by the arm chair. Fingers slipping into a cold congealed liquid she shivered before continuing her search. Coming across cold metal rings she exhaled in relief, the sound overridden by a long groan from across the room.

Gripping the keys close she turned around, remaining huddled down by the chair. In the distance shapes moved to join together in a rush of breathless sighs, writhing about in Will’s bed. She recognised almost instantly what it was she was looking at and yet she could not pull her gaze from the rhythmic movement and flashes of skin. Fingers grazed over flesh with tenderness and a care she had never felt, as though beneath Hannibal’s fingers lay a creature of such rarity. Curled over Will’s arching back, Lecter murmured sweet nothings into his shoulder, teeth grazing the flesh there with each deep thrust. Will’s head was raised high, temple pressed to Hannibal, damp curls reflecting the spare rays of light.

A shudder carried over Lecter’s back to push a groan from his throat, muscles tensing before he leaned to bite clean and deftly at Will’s neck. In response Will did not cry out, rather his lips parted in pleasure, soft mumbled words spilling from his mouth. Lowering his chest to the mattress, Will latticed their fingers together, pelvis tilting to allow Hannibal

deeper. There was a sharp intake of breath as Lecter paused and squeezed their hands hard, leaning down to nuzzle into Will's curls.

"Come on."

Needing little encouragement Lecter pressed forward and they groaned in unison, Will's name falling from Hannibal's lips in a low pray.

Margot felt a heat rise to her cheeks. Beautiful. Was it possible to consider just the act of sex objectively beautiful? The shared passion between them, the perfection of a union that had previously disturbed her now seemed so shatteringly beautiful. Everything disjointed and unsettling about them was still there, the danger, the toxicity but it was an exquisite darkness that passed between them and was *undeniably* attractive. She should leave them to their privacy for their sake or her own safety and yet, she was transfixed.

"Hannibal." Will grunted at a sharp thrust and released Lecter's hands to grip the headboard. "Fuck," he cursed, breathing becoming erratic.

Straightening up, Lecter caressed Will's hips, thumbs rubbing into the soft dips before digging deep. Pulling back he slammed forward and Will gasped, thighs shaking ever so slightly. With a groan he lunged again, pelvis meeting the rise of Will's ass with a resounding slap. Leaning his head on his arm, Will reached down to grasp his cock firmly, stroking himself with each thrust.

"Slow down. Yeah, like that. Mmm, better." He moaned.

Behind him Lecter was keen study grinding forward in a slow, languid pace, resuming his murmuring of Will's name as he kissed down his spine. The room quietened down to the sounds of moans and pleasure derived from slick flesh, and Margot swallowed, taking her chance to leave. Just short of closing the door she heard a sharp cry and could not resist the temptation to look in once more.

"Harder…" Will's voice shook, rocking forward with each savage drive into him, Lecter's wolfish teeth latched into the juncture between neck and shoulder. Spurred on by pain, what started out as Hannibal's name disintegrated into low moans as the hand around his cock sped up.

Closing the door, Margot leaned against it for a moment, allowing the cold breeze to chill the rising heat from her body. On reflection she realised it wasn't the best place, the sounds of their climax passing through the thin door to enflame an almost school girl blush on her cheeks. Taking a deep breath she shook her before heading to the car. She smirked in afterthought.

Definitely fucking.

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The scent of burnt leather and paper still lingered in the office, wrapping around the form bent over the drawing table. Palms braced on the desk's edge the figure was statuesque as he stood in silence, gazing into nothingness. The cogs in his mind rotated in chiming time with the ticks of the large grandfather clock by the door, every memory made here playing behind his eyes. The room was shrouded in a slight haze, too much fuel fed into the fire the smoke escaping into the space around him. Pages amongst pages of lives, thoughts and diagnosis turned to nothing but ash. A swift motion, years of life erased with no remorse, but anticipation for a time's end and a new beginning – with Will.

Sinking into the chair, Hannibal reached out to grasp the lone glass resting on the table, turning it over in his hand in speculation. Empty, it no longer held any warmth from Will's palm or the heated press of his lips at its rim. Dipping his head he breathed in deeply, searching for the existence of the scent that had delivered such a cruel blow. It was inane the intensity of the sadness clenching around his lungs, his steady hands trembling as though chilled by winter.

His vision blurred ever so slight and he clenched the glass hard, knuckles turning white as he tried to rein back the unbelievable grief twisting its black way through his body and mind. He feared, actually *feared* opening his mouth, unsure whether he would scream or simply cry.

Freddie was alive and he was ruined.

He could only assume to know Will's intentions but betrayal was inevitable. That Will would spare the life of a woman he actively despised contradicted every development he thought they had made in their relationship. To resist killing her proved the indulgence in his violent nature was still a parlour trick for Hannibal, one supported by Crawford and the bureau.

He knew of course that Will still harboured anger towards him, for justifiable reason, but in beguiling young eyes he had secured the chance for forgiveness from Will. Yet that chance would never, Will played a game of his own now. The creature that emerged from the chrysalis he created was very much of its own nature, but he had thought that between them lay one of those…unfathomable connections of minds. He still believed that.

And believed Will did too, but that made the betrayal was all the worse.

He hissed as the glass in his hand cracked, a shard piercing into the soft flesh of his palm. Finally his mouth opened, but he heard only silence, his pain pouring from a still tongue, spilling black grief in a way he refused his eyes. A knotted breath of air worked its way up his lungs, suffocating him as he stared down at the broken glass. There was a second where he could hear everything outside his vast room; the sound of life echoing across the footpath, nature weaving around the bustle of humanity.

Life. Love.

The moment broke as he struck out, sending the glass to shatter on the wooden floor boards. The tiny shards scattered, vibrating in the violence to produce the sweetest of chimes

as they bounced. As the silence settled over him, he found tears once again filling his eyes, the air in his throat released in a choked sob.

Had Will ever really loved him?

Had he blinded himself so severely in his desire for redamancy from the man that he had failed to see that the noose around his neck was just one amongst the many Will placed while he slept?

Breath hitching Hannibal swung out again, casting object after object to the ground. Prized ornaments and engraved stationary he adored broke and scattered as each came crashing to the floor, unfinished works of art crumpled as they were pushed from the table to flutter and join the fallen.

The tragedy of reality was all too cruel to accept. He knew his form of love was a dark and twisted thing; a thing not so easily forgiven in its obsession and toxic in its consumption but Will had *understood* it. He understood and reciprocated it, and yet he betrayed him all the same. Did he not believe himself worthy of possessing such a love at the cost of faceless others, would he deny himself the chance to be with the only one who truly embraced and understood him in return?

Or did he simply not 'accept' Hannibal's love?

There was no denying what was between them and yet Hannibal's mind tore itself apart to fathom why, when what was between them felt so right and true did he throw it all away!

In a fit of adrenaline Hannibal turned his sights to flipping over the table, hands braced in preparation before all the life slipped from him and he sunk to his knees. So ruined, mind and heart in tatters he had taken leave of his senses, behaving like a creature he no longer was. Will had done this too him, stripped the years of refinement and meticulous control he had developed, bearing the raw core of him behind his walls to the brutality that was betrayal. Reduced to an aimless violence reminiscent of his youth Will had compromised him.

Driven into romantic madness Hannibal could not bring himself to plan revenge, for he loved Will far too deeply. The future he had envisioned was melting away, but perhaps there was a chance. Will was not a binary thinker, he had shown attachment, he had shown love, if only Hannibal could convince him of its worth even in the face of his destructive nature. Should he choose of his own free will to cast away whatever concoctions he had formed with Jack Crawford, Hannibal would forgive him.

If not…his new life would be one without his beloved.

Burying his head in his hands he sighed. Never had he wanted anything more than to have his sense of smell lie to him, if only to prolong the deluded harmony he felt.

"Will…"

*

“Because I was sadder than you to start with,
I loved harder.”

Erica Jong, **Half-Lives**

Chapter End Notes

Did I mention I love vulnerable Hannibal?
Anyway, here it comes, getting close to the end now!
Love you guys, thanks for reading - you give me fuel, please let me know what you think!
Elliearna

Author's Chapter (Updated)

(New chapter is up just before this, things have been shifted accordingly to updating my author's note)

Hi there guys, I'm re-updating this author's note because ever since I wrote it, I've felt as though I made the wrong decision. For every chapter since I've try to pull away from my desire to include sexual versatility due to the fear of upsetting my readers. This is the first fanfiction I've ever decided to publish because I thoroughly enjoy writing it and you guys are an amazing audiences.

However, in the process of enjoying your comments I came to realise that I had lost sight of why I was writing this. This was always meant to be *my* interpretation and I started curbing my inspiration and desire for what I wanted to happen to satisfy a proportion who don't support/like bottom!Hannibal. And after while, chapters became harder to write, so I decided that something needed to change, as such returning myself the freedom to write what I want was ultimately the best decision. Of course realise this will upset people, and I am very sorry for the misleading of those who will stop reading because of this decision - but I hope in the process of reading you have at least enjoyed yourself. I am also especially sorry to have made a decision that I have now retracted - for me it came to down to either freeing my creative instincts or leaving this story incomplete. I really am truly sorry to those who are upset.

Quick update: Whilst writing this actually I just received a rather aggressive message stating that I have betrayed their confidence and my actions were deliberate manipulation of trust. This of course upsets me and if this was the anon's intention they can consider it a successful blow. Whilst I have replied to their message, I would really like this to be civil, so if you hate me for this, please leave peacefully and know that I am really sorry for upsetting you.

Daijuusanshō

Chapter Notes

Readers! Merry Christmas, Happy festives and a New Year and all that jazz, what ever you celebrate or don't I hope last year was amazing and this new one proves to be even more amazing!

Alright here is the last supper - pre Mizumono. This is also Bottom!Hannibal chapter, I've marked the point where any sexual interaction happens with a *Warning: Proceed with caution. for those who wish to skip the scene (it runs to the end of the chapter).

So here you go guys - eat up!
Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

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“But who prays for Satan? Who, in eighteen centuries, has had the common humanity to pray for the one sinner that needed it most?”

~Mark Twain

*

The car door was cold where it pressed against his back, yet the breeze warmed him as it blew stray curls across his face. Night had set, bringing with it heavy evening dew; the first signs of spring rain. It was sure to arrive tomorrow - just in time for Hannibal’s dinner with Jack. His chest heaved with a sigh as he gazed across the street, looking over Hannibal’s elegant, if not decadent home. This place held many memories, most of which were in all honesty good moments of companionship, fatherhood and love.

But the house held more than that for Hannibal.

The walls were practically lined with his personality, each edifice and piece of art a reflection of his appreciation and mentality. The devil is in the details. Hannibal's very own words the day he bustled his way into Will's life, yet they remained true, even now. Each detail of Hannibal's home possessed the innate facet of the truth into the mystery of the monster, an insight into the beauty and expression of his murderous philosophy. This home was the sum of the life that Hannibal had crafted for himself, one that he had shared with Will, and one that Will would now see him leave. One way or another Hannibal *would* leave it behind, whether Will witnessed it stripped from him, or stood by his side as he left it willingly.

And yet, for all Hannibal's influence, it was Will who held the power to decide which it would be. It was a crossroad he always knew was coming - he just thought by now he'd know which to choose. He really did.

He had never meant for his commitment to justice to waver. It wasn't until he watched Hannibal snap Mason's neck, failing to do what he assured he would to Jack that he became startlingly aware of how far he'd let his conviction slip from his grasp. Whilst he felt the impending pressure from Jack, Hannibal had come to expect no action from him, convinced of his loyalty after he saved him from the ordeal with the pigs. Hannibal compared their companionship to that of Patroclus and Achilles, willing to believe their love could defy the boundaries of reality. But Will didn't dare believe such romanticism and as a result he straddled the fence just as he had that first night with Hannibal, perhaps more so.

And more aware of himself than ever before he found he was trapped, unable to belong to either side with the ground crumbling beneath his feet. For Abigail and justice he should belong to Jack - and by his actions and morality he was, yet through his inaction and mentality, he belonged to Hannibal for no other reason other than the fact Hannibal was right.

Will had managed to avoid the truth of it for so long, hiding behind self-placation of love being nothing more than a detail of his illusion for Hannibal. It had been an easy thing to convince himself of, for his affection for Hannibal had never entirely left him but his indulgence in romance and murder had seen his psyche grow beyond his control – and he had let it. It was seeing Bedelia that truly shook him from the depths of the delusion he maintained for far too long. Where she had once given him clarity and determination in her whispered words of belief, her admission and perspective on Hannibal shone far too much light on the lover and killer within Will.

He thought himself safe behind the skin forged for Hannibal, killing only through coercion but Will had come to realise the truth through Bedelia's words - it had only ever really been persuasion. Some part of him had known all along, known the intrusion upon his mind and body were things of the past, for he moved and took action with far too much weight and pleasure for coercion. No, the murder of Randall flooded his system with the profound feeling of being alive. Yes, Hannibal had instrumented the situation, prescribing the scenario in which Will could be persuaded to kill Randall in defence. However such persuasive methods lawfully denied Hannibal the responsibility of Will's actions.

Hannibal had always known this was a game from the very beginning. He had turned it against Will, tempting him with the hope that he could win to surrender up his fear of the

creature within that always understood uncomfortably well the sick twisted pleasure of murder he saw in the minds of others. Only Hannibal didn't realise that Will losing was part of the game.

But then again, neither did Will.

The loss was supposed to be false, and for all Jack and Alana knew it was, but the only way he could truly trap Hannibal Lecter was to lose himself to the connection between them and become the creature he envisioned. The deception worked because in essence it wasn't pure deception but affection, empathy and psychosis motivated *by* deception.

And, in moments like this, when he was honest with himself he could admit that somewhere along the way he became curious, allowing Hannibal to persuade him to see if he was right - whether outside their game, they really were alike. He knew the capabilities of his empathy, the transferences and confusion that came with it and whilst the transference had occasionally clouded his mind, he was in control of its influence. Most of the changes that occurred within had done so with his permission, some in aid of his transformation into the perfect lure and others because of the curious desire to just relinquish the limitations he'd placed upon himself. Perhaps he was indulgent to disprove the existence of the part within him Hannibal saw and craved, but instead he had asserted it, built it to be the perfect match for Hannibal, a creature enthralled by mutual affection.

To have grown from contempt for the man, into a tolerance, to this, this…love. How could he love this man? *God,* how could he not?

Plagued by such confliction he could not even fathom whether the plan to catch and sink Hannibal would even be worth it. After all, did he really want to restrict something he had come to love to a life in a cage?

Crossing the street, Will lingered on the footpath, bemused by the urge bubbling inside to enter the sanction of this house and feel the comforting balm of Hannibal's presence. The way his voice could play across his skin, wrapping warm melodic tones around his bones, soothing him into such a calm limitless state. Hannibal may lose himself to self-congratulation and whimsy, but Will was lost to the allure of this quixotic connection that had filled his mind with romantic platitudes.

Moving his way through the front entrance, he stepped lightly down the hall, head raised to breath in the sweet aroma of Hannibal's cooking. He scoffed, astounded by how Hannibal's meals tempted and overwhelmed his tastebuds despite his knowledge of the cannibalistic content. There had been a point where the mere thought had rolled his stomach, yet he was far too adjusted now to find such disgust within himself.

Finding the kitchen empty he returned to the dining room and gazed over the canvas of culinary art set upon the table. The plates were prepared, side dishes and garnish arranged beautifully if not grotesquely upon them, the rich red sauce spilling forth from blackened figs to strike like murder across the white porcelain. The succulent smell teasing his tastebuds wafted off the steaming flesh at the centre of the table, still sizzling as though just removed from the oven. Hannibal must have heard his car pull up. He frowned looking over the whole set up, absorbing what seemed a sombre meal indeed. From the roast sprung brittle rib bones,

darkened fruit surrounding the base, a rather macabre setting for what was likely their final meal together.

"I wondered how long it would take for you to come inside." Hannibal's voice came from behind him. As he walked into view, Will eyed the glass of liquor Hannibal supported, gaze flickering to take in the red flush running up the side of his neck.

He paused, racking his memory to see whether, in all their times of drinking together, he had ever seen Hannibal display any sign of intoxication. Drawing up blanks, he took in Hannibal's stature again, finding that he moved as deftly and surely as ever as he came to stand before the meal. Though the fevered flush now settling on his cheeks suggested it, Hannibal Lecter did not act like an intoxicated man.

"Shall we." He grinned, but the gesture did not make its way to his eyes. No, that dark empty gaze lingered upon him before an unidentified emotion flashed through them causing Hannibal to visibly flinch. Coughing he drained the last of his drink and set it on the mantelpiece, taking a seat at the head of the table. Will frowned, something was wrong, but whether it was drunkenly induced or the reason behind why he'd taken to drink it was impossible to tell. In all the meals they had shared alone together, Hannibal had always taken the seat across from him, a symbol of equality, yet tonight he resumed his seat of control causing the atmosphere to darken, heady with an emotional fragility Will couldn't begin to reason.

"Please sit, Will." Nodding to the chair on his right Hannibal watched him, composure returned as he rested his hands on the wooden table, gripping the edge as though it restored whatever was lacking just moments ago.

Who knew, perhaps it did.

***

To the truth, then. And all its consequences.

The words rung hollow in Will's ears as the meal continued in silence. It left him with the lingering need to itch, as though his skin was riddled with dirt - tainted. To rebuke Hannibal's request to leave and affirm the necessity of Jack's death left a bad taste in his mouth, the words a heartless script falling falsely from his mind. Assuredly there was temptation to give in to the possible future with Hannibal, but the life of a fugitive promised nothing but the tragedy of Bonnie and Clyde.

Food passed his lips and the words continued to flow from them with no thought attached, anticipated answers devised to maintaining a deceit he no longer wished to uphold, all to lead Hannibal in the direction a trap that he was no longer committed too. None of it rang true, every falsehood slipping from his mouth to plant the vision of the opposite image in his imagination. Brightly lit Vienna streets, a heavy warmth filling him, one that had been

so dearly absent from his life, Hannibal waiting for him somewhere within the city. But life rarely offered something so perfect, especially not for devils such as they.

Yet in truth, to indulge the idea of leaving with Hannibal, to make any commitment to such a plan was to take a plunging dive off the cliff edge, the bottom unknown and obscure. It was an impossible choice to make; after all leaving with Hannibal now would burn all bridges to his past. He would be a fugitive with no support or resources to rely on other than those provided by Hannibal. He would owe himself to Hannibal in every sense of the word, entirely dependent – everything Hannibal every wanted. No, it was not a future he would accept, perhaps out of cowardice or perhaps the last breath of a good man's struggle for justice. His words of rejection settled over the table, shrouding them both in their permanency, marking the path of their future.

"To the truth, then. And all its consequences." Hannibal murmured into a glass of wine he clearly did no relish.

Dinner concluded and the dishes were swept away, Will lingering about the kitchen to offer a hand where he could as Hannibal dealt swiftly with the mess. The discomfort was evident as they spoke of useless, shallow things that were far too displaced in the usual measured melody of their conversations. Drying off his hands, Hannibal stared down into the sink, brows furrowed as his teeth caught hold of his lip in contemplation. He seemed to mull over words in a way that had Will holding his breath, waiting for something to break them from the unbearable tension.

A tongue passed quickly over his lips. "Stay the night?"

"Yes." Will breathed without even the pause of consideration.

Hannibal's eyes widened in surprise before the immobile expression on his face softened in relief. Will found himself mirroring the calm that swept through Hannibal's body, lips curling to smile as the strain between them eased substantially. Feeling restraint flitter away with his unmade decision, Will crowded close to Hannibal, neither actually touching yet the air around them seemed magnetised. His hand rose to run over the garnet red silk of Hannibal's shirt, the soft texture slipping under fingers as he travelled down the arm.

Following the languid motion with pensive eyes, Hannibal tilted his head. "Honesty. It can be such an inconsistent thing." He mused. "Tell me, are you still appalled by your dreams?"

Will smiled, hand curling around the offered wrist to feel the narrow limb beneath the crisp cuff line. "My values and decency have long since abandoned me, Doctor Lecter." He paused to bring the limb to his mouth, gazing into curious eyes as he murmured a kiss against the top of Hannibal's hand. "It seems my associations have become too much for them."

"And you are all the more self-aware without them." Hannibal's gaze grew heavy and warm, transforming the planes of his face to reflect the softer man he so rarely showed. "Perception is constructed within the controlled limitations of the mind. For years your values and decency prevented self-honesty, denying yourself true actualisation. You bruised yourself, shamed the part within and stripped it of recognition."

Will felt his body grow stiff as the words settled over him, heart beating with a dull ache as the words resonated with truth. His fingers slipped under Hannibal's cuff to run his thumb over the knotted scar, feeling the steady pulse flutter beneath the surface. "I always felt so empty, like I was missing a vital organ." He breathed with a frown.

Taking a deep breath, Hannibal leaned in to press their foreheads together. "Emptiness. Loneliness. The nature of both emotions is the cause of such a silent and achingly bearable misery." He sighed. "It is a cruelty that prevents very little unless provided power yet lingers like an unwanted guest."

"Do you still limit yourself to a false ideal Will?" Hannibal's eyes bore down on him as he drew back, breath reaching out to tickle his cheeks.

There was a moment of silence as Will watched him and measured ever word he said, the intonation and remarkably unusual look in his eyes. It held pain and a caution to tread lightly, to say the right thing, but it was an answer he could not give honestly. He knew what Hannibal wanted to hear, how he wanted Will's complete self-assurance, but he had sworn not to lie.

"I don't know. My mind was torn, every ideal shattered. Even now the pieces are still coming together, but reality has set in." He paused, fingers still playing with the soft edge of Hannibal's cuff and his brows knitted together. "What does that mean for my 'ideal' of you?"

"Such a thing is affected much like perception. Ultimately it is altered by our desire to perceive reality as we want it be." The open expression on his face began to slip away, leaving a glacial mask as he turned his head to face away from him. "…or how we hope it to be."

They breathed in silence.

"Is it your ideal that I remain a killer?"

There was a slow and precise intake of air as Hannibal seemed to mull over his words. "My ideal was for you to embrace the nature you suppressed, to see you cultivate the skills within, hone them until you truly accepted what and who you are." Eyes searched his. "What path you carved for yourself after such acceptance was always up to you. It was never for I to decide."

"But you limited my choices."

"An intrusion you were well aware of." The words were sharper than usual, cutting even. "I'll admit my techniques have not always been kind, but I only ever wanted what was the best for you – after all, would you really begrudge me my insistence to hold onto something truly dear?"

Will watched him closely, wishing for the sake of the cruelty he had experienced at Hannibal's hands that he could say yes. The form of attraction between them wasn't rational, nor was it normal, but as abnormal individuals perhaps this was the way they loved.

“No.” He took a deep breath. “No I would not, not anymore.” Drawing them closer, Will moved to cup his jaw frowning as Hannibal’s lips curved up before a flash of sorrow stopped the smile in its tracks.

Strong hands took Will by the waist as lips fell to him, bruising, teeth cutting deep, stinging in unspoken punishment yet sweet all the same. Blood burst from his bottom lip and Hannibal held on to it, fingers pressing into the back of his skull, digging his nails into his ribs as he sucked long and hard. Will should have resisted or at the very least made some sound of discomfort, yet instead he keened, teeth coming down to rake over Hannibal’s top lip, pulling sharp gasp from the man.

“Come with me.” Hannibal breathed against his lips before pulling away.

In a hazy lust, Will followed his enigmatic lover upstairs, barely aware of the coordination necessary for climbing each step, mesmerised by the arresting figure Hannibal cut against the decorum and lighting. Upon reaching Hannibal’s room he did not resist as he was pushed against the wall, lips and teeth finding purchase on his neck and jawline. Hands took a strong grip of his shirt, pulling it roughly from where it was tucked in at his waist.

Planting a hand on the wall, Hannibal drew back, breathless as he relinquished his grip on the crumpled fabric. “On the bed.” He commanded in a husky voice.

***Warning: Proceed with caution.**

Leaving the warmth of that body Will sat at the bed edge, watching where Hannibal remained against the wall, head hanging before his hand curled into a fist. The heat coursing throughout Will’s body and mind was similar to the floating intoxication after half a bottle of whiskey, but its fog was pierced by the haunted look in Hannibal’s eyes as he moved over to him. His movement were crisp as he removed his tie, seductive even with such a confident stride, but his eyes were darkened by a nameless, cold emotion. It left him curious, but no less aroused as Hannibal settled to kneel at his feet.

His legs folded neatly beneath him, fitting in between Will’s parted thighs, palms cupping his kneecaps. This image of Hannibal had a surprising effect on him, one of control, the closed off and begrudging expression on Hannibal’s face adding to the feeling of dominance coursing through him. Such reluctance should have been a cause of concern, the hesitancy flickering in those sanguine eyes indicting troubles weighing on Hannibal’s mind and yet Will was consumed by lust.

Maybe if Will had been a better man he wouldn’t have wanted only to grip him roughly by the locks and pry that stiff mouth open regardless of his hesitation - maybe even because of it. Such a consuming need to use him, to render him open and vulnerable, much like how Hannibal had rendered Will’s very being bare so many times before. Hannibal’s mind remained untouchable, but this…physicality offered him the chance to undo him in a different way.

Hannibal’s hands slid up his thighs to find his belt, deft fingers making short work of the buckle and fly. Pushing his trousers down his hips, Will felt his cock begin to swell as Hannibal pulled him from the confines of his underwear to tease and stroke him ever so

softly. Reaching out to cup Hannibal's jaw, Will slid his thumb over his bottom lip and smirked, fascinated by the way - though he returned his gaze in this moment - Hannibal's eyes never truly looked at him and *saw* him. Instead there was an absent distance to that sanguine gaze, the perfect combination between boredom and nonchalance. What thoughts were playing across that brilliant mind?

Pulling the hand from his jaw Hannibal held it against the mattress, preventing Will from touching him as he took his cock in his mouth. Will hissed in pleasure, head falling back as that tongue rolled over him tentatively, coaxing him into hard arousal. When he was fully erect, sweat beading on his forehead, Hannibal began to suck in earnest and Will launched forward in surprise, watching that perfect mouth work over him.

"Fuck…"The words slipped from him in a long satisfied groan.

Hannibal's cheeks hollowed as he took him deep, tongue kneading along the underside of his cock. Pausing to take a breath, Hannibal licked the escaping fluid from his lips, quirking an amused brow as Will's cock twitched, hands clenching into the sheets in anticipation. Smirking Hannibal slid back down, his cheekbones standing out like angular marble edges, perfectly formed yet surprisingly acute. With a moan Will reached out to touch were those lips stretched around his girth, red and slick with use. Pressing his thumb against where they met, his fingers reached down further to lay against Hannibal's throat, a shiver running through him as he felt his cock move beneath the surface.

It was an intoxicating feeling, but he wanted more, he wanted to unleash the insidious toxicity within him on Hannibal and watch him burn with it. Gripping Hannibal's hair he forced his head back, opening his throat up, lip curling as teeth grazed over his sensitive skin. Sanguine eyes narrowed as Hannibal grunted in surprise, the first noise he had uttered since commanding Will to the bed. And Will liked it, he liked it a lot. The way the vibration carried down his cock, teeth bared dangerously against his flesh in warning - a driving rush of trepidation and pure arousal.

Fastening his grip Will thrust forward, withdrawing to pause and assess the choked gasp Hannibal gave. Silent once more Hannibal only stared at him, eyes moist but feral as they dared him, salvia slipping from his mouth. Keeping his eyes trained on Will as he took the tip of his cock between his lips and stopped, mouth held open as his hands moved to brace on the inside of his thighs. A silent concession.

Such an acquisition would never be formed into words, for neither were willing to voice the relinquishing of control, but with subtle actions they could wrest it from each other. Will was consumed by the opportunity, craving the power that came from pushing those carefully constructed boundaries that lingered between them. This was one that was rooted firmly between them, for Hannibal needed to be in control, always. Even though he claimed they shared equal power between them, Hannibal frequently stole his but never could Will return the favour. Such limitations didn't exist in murder, for Hannibal had clearly enjoyed the deceit and power shift he caused with Mason, but even then, he hadn't truly been vulnerable. Not like now.

He swept the loose strands of hair from Hannibal's damp forehead before grasping them at the root, shivering as a moist tongue swiped under his foreskin. Was this thrilling

temptation to strip Hannibal down everything the good doctor felt when he broke him? To witness his mind shatter, knowing it had been *he* who had changed him so much? Was it as exhilarating as killing to fulfil that compelling need to just – do?

He planned on finding out.

Thrusting forward without further deliberation, he forced himself deep down, feeling the tight warmth of Hannibal's throat constrict around him. He couldn't move, instinct overwhelming him to linger in that heated place, throat muscles rippling over him as Hannibal struggled to breath. Though his eyes filled with involuntary tears, the hands on his thighs did not move to push him away, merely dug deep into the flesh of his thigh. *Good Boy*. Will withdrew enough for him to draw a breath.

Panting, Hannibal dipped his tongue into the slit of his cock, lips making an obscene sound as he suckled the head. Will chuckled even as his hips jerked forward instinctively, knowing that Hannibal was buying himself more time to breath. Running his hand up alongside his throat, Will plunged back down, groaning at the sweet pressure of that mouth convulsing around him. A rumble carried through Hannibal and he shut his eyes, tears spilling from the corners as he maintained suction, catching air whenever possible as Will moved back and forth. It ignited such undulated hunger within Will and he grasped either side of Hannibal's face to take in every quality of the expression there from his pain to his acceptance. Finally when it seemed surely too much, Will pulled out and Hannibal sucked in a long breath, head bent as he panted, swallowing repeatedly before looking up to scowl at him.

"I think that's enough of that." His voice was husky, words failing to end clearly as his throat rasped over the sounds.

Far from satisfied, Will lent down, hands still secured around Hannibal's face to draw him forward. The tip of his tongue dragged up Hannibal's jaw to collect the escaped mess and swipe across those swollen lips, dipping within his parted mouth to taste himself. Hannibal sighed and pushed further into the kiss, head turning frequently to gather much needed air. Not that Will minded, peppering kissing at the junction between his ear and jaw and down his neck. He felt so consumed by adoration, their teeth clicking as a result of the grin he was unable to remove from his face.

Despite the frenzied urgency to Will's kisses, Hannibal's grew gentler until he was easing himself onto his feet and out of Will's grasp. Will mewled in disappointment, standing to draw him closer again, hand reaching down to cup the hard ridge between Hannibal's legs. It was enough to make Hannibal pause, head tilting back in pleasure and Will latched onto his neck again, biting deeply, leaving scattered red suck marks across his skin.

"Will…enough." Wrenching himself away from Will's grip, Hannibal held up a hand. "Go, undress. I just need a moment, I won't be long." Sweeping his hair aside Hannibal took a deep breath before turning and enter the bathroom, door closing behind him.

Will frowned. Last time he was here Hannibal had practically waved his nakedness in front of him, all doors left wide open in temptation.

Ignoring the impulse to enter the bathroom after him, Will slowly removed his clothing, the silence of the room broken by the steady sound of water running. By the time the water stopped, Will was so immersed in the Japanese artwork in front of him that he almost didn't hear the sharp gasp from the bathroom. He pursed his lips, staring at the door before he huffed, reminding himself that it had been shut for a reason.

When Hannibal emerged from the bathroom he was entirely naked, his cheeks flushed and hair dishevelled and wet. Will was in front of him, his fingers moving around his bare waist to trail over damp skin before he even registered his desire to run his hands down the lean curve of Hannibal's body.

A hand came around to clasp his back as Hannibal walked forward, intentionally forcing Will to fall back onto the bed. Following after him, they kissed in gentle sojourn pressing deep into the sheets. It almost made Will forget the concerns surrounding tonight and the fears of tomorrow – almost. He braced himself over Hannibal, their legs locked around each other, erections pressed against the soft flesh of warm thighs. Gazing down at that striking face, he once more saw haunted eyes, unable to determine whether the pain lingering there was damage he should address. Beautifully crafted hands wrapped around his body distracting him from his thoughts as they cupped the angles of his shoulders and collar bones before sliding down over the rise of his hip.

Shifting Hannibal pulled his legs away, disentangling them to widened his thighs, guiding Will to lay between them. As their cocks slid together, Will jolted forward, grinding down to obtain that delicious friction again. Hannibal sighed as they slipped together before urging Will to sit up, hands still woven into his curls to hold their faces close. Murmuring kisses over his mouth, Hannibal pressed their cheeks together, unsteady breathes falling from shaky lips as he paused in deliberate hesitation.

Drawing in a deep breath those lips moved against his ear, the words formed initially indistinguishable, that low strained timbre whispering, "fuck me."

A wave of lust shot through Will and he blinked as Hannibal guided his hand down to meet the firm rise of his arse. As his fingers slipped down in between the cleft of his cheeks, Will kissed up the column of his neck, wondering whether Hannibal was sure. It wasn't a matter of Will penetrating Hannibal, for such a desire had most certainly tempted them equally. The real question was whether now was the moment to explore the new dynamic when such a nameless atmosphere hung over them? Yet though he held concerns over why Hannibal was doing this now, he couldn't deny how much he wanted this.

Venturing lower he encountered a wet slick and his eyes widened in surprise, realising why had Hannibal left for the bathroom. Atmosphere or no, Hannibal had prepared for this, wanting it just as much as Will. Such knowledge left Will shaking with an electrified need and Hannibal shifted, rising to his knees before turning to lower his chest down to the sheets. While his body beckoned Will, those sanguine eyes watched him over his shoulder, brows drawn in contemplation as though trying to fathom a missing puzzle piece. Was this a play in their game of fish and lure?

Will knew he should have reacted to the tension prickling the hairs on the back of his neck, should have voiced concern over his lover's withdrawn behaviour but he was transfixed

as Hannibal folded his arms to pillow his head, legs widened further, presenting to Will. Throat dry, he stared as excess lube trickled down the inside of those lean but muscular thighs. It made his cock pulse, the ache in his pelvis building to near painful as his desire mounted.

"Are you ready or should I—?"

"I'm ready." Came the short reply and Will nodded, moving forward, his fingers reaching out to slip through the slick despite himself.

"Will—." Hannibal's voice hitched as he slipped a finger in to the knuckle finding no resistance, his other hand pressed against the taut place just behind his balls. Feeling the soft walls clenched around the digit Will shuddered before removing the finger to coat his cock with spit, thumb continuing to massage the perineum. Pressing the tip of his cock to that hot ring of muscle Will felt it twitch and with gritted teeth sunk forward, losing the ability to feel any sensation other than the searing pressure encasing him. Hunching over Hannibal's shuddering back, he felt the groan resonated from beneath him, the sound muffled into his arms. Securing his hands around Hannibal's hips, Will eased himself deeper, shifting to set a steady rhythm, relishing the suction with each withdraw.

It wasn't long before his rhythm began to falter, too heady and weighted as though drunk off the intoxicating feeling of the man beneath him. But Hannibal had grown quiet, body rocking forward as though automatic, desensitised even. Gripping his shoulder, Will pulled him back hard, slamming his pelvis forward, the force filling the room with slick obscenely erotic sounds. However save for a short grunt, Hannibal remained silent. Frowning Will reached around to grasp his cock, only to find him limp and halted his thrusts, worried that perhaps he was hurting him.

"Don't worry." Hannibal murmured, hand reaching around to find purchase on Will's ass, pushing himself back onto his cock.

Will felt his arousal wane as he was filled with doubt. Was he hurting him? He didn't think so, for though it was his first time penetrating Hannibal, it wasn't his first dalliance with anal sex and nothing seemed amiss. Running his hands over the muscles on that broad back, he found them loose with acceptance, entirely free of tension – too much so, like a rag doll. It was as though he was miles away, plagued by other thoughts, occupied so completely by something that he felt nothing, no pleasure, no connection. Will gritted his teeth, suddenly angry. From the moment he stepped through the door something was amiss, Hannibal observing the exchange between them in a vastly different way, thoughts playing across his mind, creating this distance between them.

And yet Will had thought he was offering him something, an experience to be shared, yet he escaped from it, his mind hiding elsewhere, perhaps within the halls of his palace. How dare he offer something so significant only to take all meaning from it with his absence! Come tomorrow their romance would be ashes and dust, never again would he be able to touch him, never again to feel his murderous lover. His perfect person, the one equal being who understood him in perfect harmony, but he just had to be a killer. Hannibal had made him love him, made him love a man who would ruin him or lose forever – he owed him this moment. This last moment.

He would not allow their last time to go to waste; he would make Hannibal feel something. He would make sure he felt him no matter where he ended up. Together or apart.

Pulling out he twisted Hannibal's body onto his back, ignoring his grunt of surprise as he lowered himself between the clasp of warm thighs. Hannibal's upper lip twitched in discomfort, eyes refusing to meet Will's as he thrust back within him. Grasping hold of his ass, Will tilted Hannibal's hips up as he ground down and Hannibal's back arched, hands fisting into the sheets. His head was thrown back as a groan of pleasure stumbled from his mouth, eyes clenching shut. At such an honest expression, Will moaned, curls plastered down to his skull as he snapped his hips back and forth, spurred on by the short gasps slipping through Hannibal's tight lips with every thrust.

The change in position was better, the angles more pleasurable, but it was the sight of Hannibal now that fed his carnality. Burying his head into the pillow Hannibal bared his neck, a red flush carrying along his skin as the marks from earlier stood out with their dark bruising colour.

"Hannibal, look at me." He whispered, he needed to see that gaze, no matter how cold, how poisonous or troubled it was.

It was none of these things. Fists flexing amongst the sheets, Hannibal's gaze was awed, consumed with pleasure before the corners of his mouth pulled down, brows drawing together. Gritting his teeth, Hannibal turned away once more and shook his head in refusal. Will slammed forward, hipbones pressed to the firm curve of his ass and Hannibal shouted, hands shooting out to latch onto Will's forearms.

Resting his head against the layer of hair on his chest, Will hooked those long legs higher, thrusting sporadic, hard strokes aimed at that pleasurable place he had found, feeling Hannibal's heart race beneath his ear. Looking up once more, he found Hannibal staring into the distance, simply refusing to look at Will, to look at what he was doing to him.

What was with this behaviour?

Unless…it wasn't what Hannibal refused to see, but rather what Will would find lurking in those eyes. Will scowled, irritated that the same thought kept plaguing him, plaguing them both – why wouldn't Hannibal just let it go? Something was tearing at his lover's mind, but with the impending nature of tomorrow Will refused to dwell and lose this chance to hold him one last time. Of course Hannibal wouldn't share Will's urgency, knowing little of the catastrophe they were in store for tomorrow – at least, he couldn't possibly know.

Don't fool yourself into thinking he's not in control of what's happening.

Bedelia's words to Jack, ones Crawford had passed on in warning. Perhaps this behaviour was Hannibal's reaction to the expected course of tomorrow; after all he had been hesitant to kill Jack, wanting nothing more than to run away tonight. Had Will hurt him with his refusal? He had certainly hurt himself.

Reaching out he cradled Hannibal's face tenderly, "Look at me Hannibal."

“I can’t. It’s not possible. Not like this.” His voice shuddered over the words and Will looked down to see his cock hard and leaking where it was trapped between their abdomens. He smiled, licking a strip up that damp neck, relishing the soft moan pulled from those lips as he nibbled at them gently.

“Hannibal, please look at me.”

Those eyes flickered warily as they locked on him and in the midst of pleasure Will was struck by an agonising pain, as though his heart was breaking. He had no words, not for how such pain had originate within Hannibal, nor what to do with such knowledge. He could only dive down, capturing those lips again; palm gripping his jaw to locked them together as he pounded into him relentlessly. Hannibal’s arms wound around his neck as their bodies slipped together in the sheen of sweat, angles and softness creating an electric friction between them. He could feel Hannibal’s cock strain between them and wrapped his hand around it, swallowing the raspy moan as he stroked him.

As Hannibal panted, Will sucked down each exhale, drawing his air into his lungs to hold just a little part of him closer. All he could think of was how much he loved this man. A man he was sure to lose tomorrow. He bit down hard on Hannibal’s tongue, chasing after it to savour the metallic taste of that precious fluid keeping his lover alive, all the while fearing the possibility of seeing it spilt come tomorrow. He wanted to keep a part of him within him, to consume a part of his soul so he could never leave him, not really.

“I love you.” He breathed into those bloody lips; their faces pressed uncomfortable close as though they could fuse together with enough pressure. Underneath him Hannibal froze and with a final stroke his back arched, hot cum coating Will’s hand. Eyes clenched shut Hannibal cried out, a short erotic sound that broke into silence as his head tilted back, body still rocking, urging Will to continue.

“Fucking hell.” Will groaned, orgasm drawing closer after such a display. Yet he slowed down a little in his pace, cautious of Hannibal’s sensitivity, murmuring into his collar bones as the man puffed beneath him. Those sanguine eyes were shuttered by half closed eyelids, tongue peeking out to moisten his lips repeatedly as he took shallow breaths. Will loved him like this, dopey, cheeks enflamed with blood, hair in his eyes and strewn messily across the pillow.

“I love you, Hannibal.” He repeated again and again, as though he could tattoo the words into their skin so neither would forget it, no matter what happened tomorrow.

“Why then.” That voice was alert and unexpectedly angry.

Frowning he looked down in confusion into enraged red eyes. Suddenly he was thrown to the side, body straddled immediately as Hannibal lowered himself back down onto his cock. His broad hand rested in the centre of his chest, holding Will down as he proceeded to ride him, motion jolted and uneven. It looked entirely painful and uncomfortable. He reached out a hand to grasp Hannibal’s hips and slow down the movement but he was slapped away. Will winced at the painful angle, watching helplessly as Hannibal gritted his teeth and ground down harder, eyes pinched, torn between menacing and pained.

Something in Hannibal appeared to be breaking, emotions and thoughts culminating to tear himself apart from the inside. Was the anger directed at himself or Will…or both? Suddenly Hannibal's hand shot out to grasp him by the throat, clenching down with the clear intent of choking him. His mind kicked into panic mode, hand instinctively coming up to rescue himself from the deadly grasp, but just as he was about to catch hold of Hannibal he stopped and contemplated the beautiful monster above him. Save from reflexive instinct, Will did not fear Hannibal. He could not honestly believe Hannibal would kill him in this moment, no matter how much he wanted to, or thought he wanted too.

Will willed his body to relax even as Hannibal's eye ticked and his hand tightened in response. The pressure continued to pile as the look in Hannibal's eyes grew more desperate, more confused, but even then, Will knew he was capable of killing a man in seconds. Hannibal was prolonging this, gripping his windpipe rather than applying pressure to his artery, displaying a rare moment of extreme emotion triggered by Will, triggered by pain. But he didn't want to kill him, not really. His hips had stopped moving, focused entirely on slowly squeezing but even as dark spots began to dance across Will's vision he watched him patiently.

Top lip curling up, Hannibal bared his teeth for a brief moment and a sharp ache filled Will's chest as anguish traversed across that flushed face. *Ah, I hurt you deeply, haven't I?*

And then it was over, the hands at his neck slipping away as Hannibal grimaced and sucked his teeth. His hunched shoulders dropped, body drained of the energy and rage that had motivated him now sitting silently, watching Will with bated breath. After a while, Hannibal seem to collect himself, raising his head to look down his nose at him, assessing him. Even naked and clearly vulnerable, the image of Hannibal was powerful and arresting in a way that left Will's mouth dry. However, Hannibal's eyes undid the solidarity of his whole demeanour as he looked at him a little sadly, voice broken.

"Me too."

Will's eyes widened. Watching him for a moment, he caught the second Hannibal began to crumble, launching up to embrace him, inadvertently shifting Hannibal back down on his cock. Hannibal's lips pinched in pain and Will smiled in apology, rolling them once more.

"Can I?" He asked and Hannibal nodded, gripping his neck to pull him down into a breathless kiss. Separating, Will spat into his hand and coated himself liberally before easing himself inside Hannibal, the extra lubrication allowing him to encase himself fully even as the walls convulsed around him. No longer reserved Hannibal groaned loudly and Will buried his head into his shoulder, picking up the pace. Hoisting up his legs into the air, he bent Hannibal close together, his feet dangling uselessly over Will's arms. At this angle Hannibal began to shudder in earnest, body overwhelmed by rakes of pleasure and over sensitivity.

"No, Will, I can't." He hissed as Will attempted to coax him back into full hardness.

"I love you." Will murmured, grazing his teeth along that pronounced jaw. As his orgasm drew closer his hands ran down over the sinewy curve of Hannibal's thighs, admiring

how they tapered from such narrow hips. As he buried his head into Hannibal's chest hair it dawned on him that should Hannibal ever *truly* wish to fight or kill him, Will would struggle greatly to survive such an attack.

Hannibal held the power in all domains of his life, and yet he had submitted to Will emotionally, exposing himself in such a raw way. His desire to be penetrated was nothing more than that, a desire, one that perhaps took some amount of control relinquishing, but it was nothing in the face of Hannibal's emotional vulnerability. Clearly he had battled with his thoughts and fears, the warring reluctance manifesting in his behaviour, causing him to lash out. Yet Will felt as though it was a final struggle, the last tactic of a wounded animal before the only resort left was blood and violence. Where his own admission had come freely, Hannibal's had bit back with all it had, struggling not to be revealed, but he knew it now.

Hannibal loved him.

Winding his hand back through the damp strands of Hannibal's hair he forced his head to the side as his thrusts became more erratic, the heat inside coiling up like a spring. He could hear his blood thrumming in his skull, Hannibal's low voice whispering mostly incoherent words of encouragement. Finally feeling himself peak he cried out before biting down hard into the flesh of Hannibal's shoulder as he came, jerking as pleasure shot through him in scattered sparks.

Collapsing on the body beneath him, he felt a warm hand come up to stroke his hair as he panted, eyes heavy with exhaustion. "Good boy, I've got you. I've always got you." The voice below murmured as he was rolled gently away from that warm heat into the sheets.

He tried to keep his eyes open from where his head was cradled by a pillow as Hannibal moved to the bathroom, but they closed of their own volition. At the touch of a warm cloth sliding over his sensitive cock he jolted awake and reached out to drag the form bent over him into his arms. Ignoring the sounds of protest he wanted only to hold that warm body against him, pulling Hannibal down until his back was nestled against his chest, nose buried in those soft aromatic strands of silver hair.

Mind drifting away from the moment, caught in the kiss of sleep he heard a voice, faint and sorrowful. "I love you, Will."

*

Chapter End Notes

Love confessions and pain. Hannibal's heart is breaking, I reason that he was torn between wanting to give Will some thing of himself and wanting to take something of Will's as a goodbye, also maybe trying to convince Will of their worth (secretly his worth perhaps) in the hopes that he could make Will change his mind and leave with him.

Anyway, I hope you guys liked it! Let me know what you think in the comments below, but no Bottom!Hannibal hate kay? Only love <3
Elliearna

Daijuuyonshō

Chapter Notes

Here it is, Mizumono.

Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

If you must die, sweetheart
Die knowing your life was my life's best part

You – Keaton Henson

*

"Will?"

He had been naïve. So foolishly naïve.

"Goodbye Alana." Lights shining through the windows, Will watched the black cars pull up his drive way, sending the dogs into a frenzy. Agents with no understanding of what was at stake would waste their time arresting him for the murder of Randall Tier and as an accessory to entrapment. He would ride, cuffed behind tinted windows as miles away Jack confronted Hannibal, to capture his lover or die trying.

Hannibal.

Without the precautions they had planned and the force of the FBI behind him, Jack would die at Hannibal's hands. Highly skilled and as strong as Jack may be Hannibal had demonstrated many a times his ability to take on an opponent stronger and heavier than himself with his countless victims of such description. Yes, Jack would fare well, long and hard, but in the end Hannibal would outlast him.

Pulling on his jacket, he retrieved a gun from his drawer, checking the cartridge before fleeing out the back door. As he ran his heart pounded in his ears, body filled with the

incited adrenaline of the unknown. Everything was moving so fast now; nothing could be predicted. Trees flew past his vision as he dodged and weaved through them, working his way to the main road. If Alana didn't know where Jack was, it was all too likely he had gone to Hannibal's ahead of schedule. Will gritted his teeth. He had to get there, and promptly, otherwise people he loved and cared about would die.

But first.

Bracing himself against a tree, he withdrew his mobile from his pocket and stared at it. His agenda had become become so confused, his intentions incomprehensible even to himself, but he didn't want anyone to die…most of all Hannibal. He had to give Hannibal a chance, to spare Jack a fight he would lose and to save a man many thought wasn't worth saving. His fingers input Hannibal's number in the mobile, pressing the call button before he had the chance to second guess his choice.

"Hello?"

Will's breath caught in his chest. His mind was a sea of thoughts, his fears, the multitude of decisions he could make in this moment reaching out from the depths of his mind screaming, whispering, pleading and laughing. Around his head they played as a dim but insistent noise; save Jack, save himself, but one thought rose from the splitting cavern of his mind with complete coherent clarity. Save Hannibal.

But why save Hannibal when this was heading to his capture much like they had planned? To ensure Jack lived? Perhaps, but that was not the reason his heart ached at the sound of that low voice, it was not the reason why the only clear word within the fog of his mind was *Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal*. If Hannibal was caught, they would find themselves in jail together, but his beloved would be kept locked in a padded cell far away from him. They would strip away everything that was Hannibal Lecter to understand him from the inside out – and he would never give it to them. For that they would destroy him in any way they could. For all the halls and rooms of his palace his beautiful mind would rot held in such a dank place, brain set afire with poison and electricity.

He clenched his fist, a wave of nausea running through him. He would not see that happen, he couldn't. Though it went against everything he'd worked for, everything he wanted for Abigail…he was weak. So weak and naïve.

Leave. Run.

"They know." He breathed, hearing the short intake of air, the kind that caught in one's throat from the other line and closed his eyes.

In his mind he saw Hannibal at his kitchen bench, meal preparation stretched out before him. His expression was severe, grip around the phone tightening just enough for Will to hear the plastic creak. Did the news surprise him? He held his breath, though he expected no answer. This could very well be the last time he would hear his voice. Many would take this moment to sprouted sweet platitudes of love, but such a display was vulgar and unlike them. He wanted only to hold onto the tone of his voice, carve it into his memory. But time

was wasting and there was nothing more to say, yet he couldn't bring himself to hang up, clinging to the sound of Hannibal carrying through the speaker with each exhale.

He wouldn't say good bye, he couldn't.

There was a hitched draw of breath, the brief sound of lips parting as though Hannibal might say something after all before the line went dead. He sighed, eyes pinching close, taking but a precious moment to gather himself. The continuous static finally pushed him to hang up the phone and suck fresh air down greedily before he set off further into the woods. His fingers fumbled to call a taxi in the dark as his mind wandered over the course his life was taking. With the warrant for his arrest posing the likelihood of a jail sentence, Will's future was decidedly bleak. How different this could have gone had he chosen to flee with Hannibal yesterday. After all, every qualm he had held very little discrepancy to a future of imprisonment.

Would Hannibal take him even now?

***

You were supposed to leave.

Once during a session Hannibal called him an eideteker, explaining that, from his conclusion of Will's methods, his form of empathy was so profound that he could feel everything from the point of view of another, recalling smell, sights and emotions as though they belonged to him. In this moment he wished that wasn't true.

We couldn't leave without you.

Hannibal's hand rose unsteadily, a betrayal and grief so poignant in his eyes that it rendered Will immobile. Fingers slipping down his cheek in a caress, Hannibal's eyes looked over him as though trying to absorb his every detail, sketching it into his mind. Moving to cup his face, the touch was sensitive yet electrifying and Will could only stare in reverence at the sight of Hannibal, raw and vulnerable, bared in a way he hadn't thought possible.

Their masks were gone now.

Standing so close together as though fused, they finally exposed all of who they were in a moment of full, complete expression. Together and separate, true and clear they saw each other. Hannibal who, for all Will's doubts had never lied about his love and cruelty, was now left aching in the violent wake of his destruction. And Will, the murderer with a loving heart, one that for all his hesitancy was willing to betray what he so dearly wanted in order to do the right thing, heart changed far too late to dam back the flood of Hannibal's agony. At every turn he had betrayed them all, one way or another, Jack, himself, Hannibal, even Abigail – *ah* Abigail.

She had been spared by Hannibal for Will.

He was sure she had been a figment, a haunting illusion to add to his list of ghosts but then she had spoken, fear shaking her voice. He should have gone to her then, embraced her, but from the moment he saw her, he felt as though he had lost the ground beneath him, swaying within a trance of disbelief and surrender. Everything he had intended was pointless, his betrayal was *pointless*.

And now Hannibal stood there in anguish, the colours of pain pouring from him to embed under Will's skin, its vividness overpowering any emotions of his own. It started like pins and needles at the tips of his fingers as those sanguine eyes took him in, the chill growing like roots up his veins to freeze him from the inside. His beloved looked damaged, clothes and hair dishevelled, stained in blood, most of it his own - but not all, his striking face battered and bruised. But this was nothing but a canvas for a heart bleeding beneath the surface. Where Hobbs had been swarming flies to scatter, Hannibal was a hurricane of turbulent emotion, a tormented cycle of misery that turned inward to tear away at something within. As a warm thumb brushed over his cheekbones, Hannibal drew in a deep breath, throat bobbing as he took Will in once more, expression full of resignation.

The game was over.

There was a brief moment as the tip of the blade pierced his flesh where he felt nothing before he was engulfed in a searing fire, white and blinding. The penetration was nothing like the cold numbness of being shot, every nerve screaming as the knife sliding across his stomach and he gasped and shuddered as it raked through him. Yet this somehow paled in comparison to the assault on his mind, this reflection of the broken creature before him who poured his bitter and inconsolable rage over him as he clasped him close. Every form of resistance was blown from him as he dropped the gun and surrendered, reaching out to grasp Hannibal in support - but mostly in apology. With Hannibal's desolation breathing at his ear, he realised now the potency of that last caress, the touch of a man taking one last chance to show true and pure affection, the final kiss before he bled his broken heart and ruined them.

But Will ruined them first, he knew that now.

Strong arms swept him up into an embrace, taking his weight and the hand coated in the blood of his loved ones clenched the back of his head, fingers weaving through his curls. Hannibal's voice was calm as he spoke to him, though his grip tightened as every word beared more of his grief over Will's betrayal. Shock was overloading his senses though he tried to cling to each word Hannibal spoke no matter how the syllables drove shards through his heart.

As that face pressed to his ear he recalled the embrace of last night. Hannibal had known that he was false even as he lay with him - even as he let Will take so much from him, he knew that Will planned to take so much more. Though trying to comprehend Hannibal's words amongst the pain ravaging his body, Will wept at the memory of that heartbroken expression, picturing each look of doubt and sadness for what they truly signified – his last chance to show love.

And you, you wanted to surprise me.

Slipping from Hannibal's grip he was cast away and yet as he hit the ground he felt he deserved it. Hannibal gave him the chance to come clean with the truth of his deceit and Will had rejected him. Perhaps he wouldn't have really forgiven him, but Will knew Hannibal would have accepted him all the same. He would have taken Will in his arms with the knowledge that he had been duped, that he had believed in the creature Will only appeared to be, in the unique compatibility he thought Will believed in too. It would have taken time to convince Hannibal that Will did believe it and that even as that compatible creature he could still love and betray him all the same for the part of him that was still a good man - for Abigail. But no words could explain that now, not when they would so uselessly fall from his lips like excuses as she stood not five feet away from them, beautiful even in her fear. Hannibal's loving surprise for him.

They would have been a family.

"I gave you a rare gift." With a thin sheen of unshed tears in his eyes, Hannibal's lip trembled, voice caught. "But you didn't want it."

"Didn't I?" He struggled to form the words as he held Hannibal's gaze and watched it shudder, trying so hard not to crumble. He had forced Hannibal to expose himself, layer after layer, abusing the precious gift, but what he saw there had been magnetising and resplendent. And now it was harrowing and cruel. Hannibal's survival instincts would surely save him even as his heart fell apart, but what did such finely tuned and violent urges have in store for Will?

Those fathomless depths shook him to the core of his being as they looked down upon him and he wished for the strength to pull him close once more to sooth away all the misery between them. Once he had wanted Hannibal's life when he was filled with a rage so consuming it knew no bounds, but now he didn't even want his pain. It was cutting him so deep, deeper than any blade to feel the invasion of the bruising dolour spilling from a heart that was - though initially encased in iron - more fragile than any other.

Will you forgive me?

Floating between reality and each bitter surge of Hannibal's wild onslaught, a cold wave was dropped over him as Hannibal beckoned Abigail to his side. The connection to him vanished as Will's body filled with a fear that was entirely his own.

"Don't, don't. N-no. No, no no." He protested as the scene before him played to a familiar tune. Pressing his face lovingly to her head, Hannibal embraced their daughter, holding the blade coated in Will's blood to her throat. But he paused to stare at Will as he begged and pleaded in every way he could, broken body writhing, head shaking and eyes screaming as his voice choked.

He blinked and Will saw a tremor in the hand around the blade. "You would try to save her again?"

“Y-yess.” Will croaked, weak hands stretching around him, feeling about the ground for leverage to try and drag himself to his feet.

In amongst the raw pain there, Will saw curiosity flicker beneath the damaged surface. “She was my surprise - my gift to you. What would you offer me in return?”

“My life—.”

“But I already have that.” Hannibal’s voice had a certain venom to it, a bitterness that warned him to remember the claim his blade had made on Will. It spoke of an unhinged promise that Will would belong to Hannibal, in life and in death.

Yes, Will conceded, he supposed that was true. In some twisted kind of way his life belonged to Hannibal. But Abigail didn’t owe him hers. For the irreparable damage they had done to her, she deserved her freedom – he would not let Hannibal steal her life away, not again. But he could not bargain with the devil for her, after all Hannibal would likely cut her down just to spite him, like a child breaking his toys.

Reaching out under the bench, he touched the cold metal of a gun barrel and securing it in his grasp he looked to Hannibal. For Abigail’s life would he offer Hannibal death? Would he strip away everything he had agonised over saving? When he was still in Baltimore State Hospital he envisioned many scenarios where he had discovered Hannibal’s identity earlier, saving Abigail. In many of these dreams he had put a bullet in Hannibal’s brain himself.

Could he do it now to save her?

Hand shaking he pulled the gun from cover, arm fastened around his split stomach as he aimed the barrel at his most precious person.

Hannibal’s face broke with a sweet, sad look of affection. “Could you do it?” He asked voice thick with endearment. “Will you cut me down like Hobbs?”

Will’s face twisted into a frown. Hannibal wouldn’t listen to any reasoning, far beyond such forgiveness in his destruction, yet that didn’t account for his behaviour now. Why was he lingering? He was intent on harming Abigail, to throw her away, a pertinent insult to Will amongst the deluge of unfortunate causalities. And Will did feel as though Jack and Alana were merely unfortunate to be caught in the path of destruction barrelling quite markedly for him. After all, Hannibal wished to show mercy on Jack last night. It would have been possible for Hannibal to walk away without this outburst, but he needed to leave a lasting impression, for both Will and himself – he needed to break his own heart to leave Will behind.

To do so he would destroy his gift.

Will was beginning to feel woozy, their images blurring before him, his hands and feet feeling all to detached from his body as blood continued to spill forth from his wound. He didn’t have a lot of time before he lost consciousness; he imagined Hannibal would find

that rude. At least they would die together. It would be fitting to have killed each other, but that perhaps would be a punishment too sweet for Hannibal.

Though Will's action may have triggered tonight, Hannibal deserved to be punished, for the sake of Alana, broken and mangled on the front porch and Jack drowning in his own blood in the pantry. He deserved to be punished for his destruction, and living with it was the hardest thing of all. Will may have ravaged his heart, but it was Hannibal who truly destroyed himself.

Keeping his silence, Will cocked the gun and gritted his teeth, willing his trembling arm to be still, lest he hit Abigail. The shot didn't have to be fatal, he only needed to incapacitate Hannibal and get Abigail out of harm's way. However with his blurred vision and shaky hands he could very easily kill either of them, but Abigail was dead should he do nothing. Should he miss and kill Hannibal, it would be almost poetic, after all better that it be a death by his hands, the final way he could consume Hannibal and claim him.

Flicking off the safety, Will lined up the shot though his hand wavered and Hannibal smiled sadly.

He released the bullet as Hannibal slid the blade into Abigail's neck at the healed incision of her father's crime. But the blade stuttered, dropping from his hand as the bullet made contact and Abigail stumbled forward, hand clasped to her throat, trying to stop the blood flow. Will's eyes should have been on her, to ensure she was all right, but all he could do was watch as Hannibal was thrown back on to the floor.

The gun came clattering to the ground. He had never been a good marksman, but perhaps it would be fate's decision that he had missed and murdered his lover, fitting even. But Will didn't want it.

"*Hannibal*." He whispered through gritted teeth.

As his eyelids began to shutter he saw the body move, rising to its feet, grasping his right shoulder. He sighed and grimaced, it seemed he would die alone. Searching for Abigail he found her huddled in the corner of the kitchen, tea towel pressed to her throat as thick red liquid ran down over her chest. But she was alive, damaged, but alive. Looking back at Hannibal he saw those sanguine eyes piercing into him as they calculated, stumbling over the thoughts in his head. It was visible the struggle confounding his mind as his eyelashes fluttered, brows pinching together as he staggered, balance unsteady.

Hannibal's chest heaved a great sigh as he stared like a child lost in a sea of faces, cheeks moist. "Remarkable boy," He started with a shuddering breath. "I would have given you my heart."

Will smiled then. *You already did*.

Keeling over, his consciousness faded in and out. Disconnecting from himself he felt a hand pass down his cheek before it was gone, pulling its warmth away and he moaned. In the distance he heard Abigail cry out as she crawled her way over to him. Tragedy swarmed around him, but he felt strangely at peace.

Hannibal at least would live.

*

If you must leave,
Leave as though fire burns under your feet,

If you must live, darling one,

Just live

Just live

You – Keaton Henson

*

Chapter End Notes

There's a debate on whether the wound inflicted on Will was A) supposed to kill him and B) Whether it even could. I considered leaving things here, but I have a few more chapters that will bring us to a happy ending, or if you like your pain, Will could quite easily die here :) I'm writing furiously so you guys don't have to wait too long to see where this story is going, but it will be worth the wait!

A big thank you to Silverangelfeathers my life saviour for all the help! xx

Elliearna

Daijuugoshō

Chapter Notes

Little nervous about this one cause it was kinda the compilation of all my thoughts after Mizumono, my way of processing what happened as well as few theories and ideas I've seen about, so enjoy lovelies and let me know what you think after feasting!

And I just have to say thank you all so much for coming along this road with me, its so amazing! Especially to have received such support on my first fic so thank you all!!! And a special thanks once more to the darling Silverangelfeathers

Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

Loving You was the Most Exquisite Form of Self Destruction

*

He was awoken when the car jolted roughly to a stop. As his body tensed in reflex, the fresh, tender scarring across his abdomen screamed at him. Insides roiling as alcohol sloshed within, a wave of nausea washed over him as he groggily took in his surroundings, trying to make sense of where he was, and when.

"We're here." A voice spoke quietly from the driver's seat. Will blinked. That's right. Jack had come to his cold hollow house, plucked the bottle from his hand and pulled him out into the bright light, whisking him away somewhere his idle, intoxicated mind could not recall.

“Coffee, take it. You smell like a backwater bar.” Jack frowned and Will took the styrofoam cup, looking the man over. Once again he was surprised to hear such a low quiet timbre come from a man he remembered to bellow and command with strength and weighted sound. Cocking his head, his eyes wandered up the short, pale pink scar on Jack’s neck, fascinated by how such a small incision had cause so much damage, very nearly taking his life.

Jack frowned. “Will, don’t do that.”

Will raised an eyebrow and Jack sighed. “Those eyes— they make you seem like him. And that’s one thing you can’t afford to bring in here, not now.”

Even if it’s true.

Will took a deep breath, looking out the window to see Hannibal’s grand house once more, police tape slashed across the premises. Nearly two months had passed since the day Hannibal carved his freedom from their bodies. For a while, as Will laid in the hospital sheets, morphine coursing through his system he had felt happy, that all in all he had survived Hannibal, his lover free from the planned cage and Abigail by his side once more. That serenity quickly fled as reality returned, consequences ripping his life anew. In the wave of death that followed Hannibal’s tantrum, the gravity of Will’s actions, of his inaction built anguish and bitterness within, cowing him to drown in a bottle where he tried to forget it all.

He snorted to himself, earning a frown from Jack. He always seemed to be drowning.

That night he had drowned in the inane lunacy of love, its abusive violation of his sensibilities and morality eliciting his complete surrender and weakness in the face of Hannibal’s rage. He had been blinded with affection, still able to taste Hannibal’s scent on his tongue, the memory of touching him so deeply seared into his mind. Being possessed by such a vivid experience had worked in Hannibal’s favour, yet perhaps the same could be said in reverse.

He trailed a hand absentmindedly over his stomach as he stepped out of the car, feeling the soft fabric run over the raw scar.

The doctors informed him that the wound had not been deep enough to penetrate any vital organs, a blessedly easy fix, though one that had considerable time of hospital confinement and a vulgar scar – Hannibal’s mark. Just under a month in the hospital had given him time to think, to feel and react to the news and death around him. In the wake of Hannibal’s destruction everything was in shambles. That shattered teacup had collected itself, but the cracks ran deep, useless and unable to hold anything substantial so he filled the gaps with whatever solace he could find. Alcohol seemed to do the job, for a while anyway, filling the two spaces that made hollows in his heart. But his sorrow was inconsolable, the weight of responsibility only mounting as the body count rose. Hannibal had not left America, rather turned the country into his hunting grounds, littering bodies throughout the states and Kade Purnell, like Jack before her would do anything to see him caught.

And so once more the bloodhound was to put to use.

At least until Purnell made a decision as what to do with him and the evidence pertaining to the Randall Tier's case.

Walking up the front steps, he stopped short and looked to the skies, body tingling as though standing under rainfall. Eyes dropping to the pavement he felt his heart clench. He'd missed Alana's funeral, lost to a drugged sleep but the news had hit him with a hot, burning inability to breath, as though someone had placed a weight on his chest. She had been so brave to step within reach of Hannibal's hurricane, to try to protect, to try and save Jack and Will, despite what he had done. Jealousy was an irrational feeling, one that he had not been able tame, but in some way he had always loved her, despite her romance with Hannibal, yet in the end she had been a pawn he had abused just as much as Hannibal.

She had deserved so much better.

His eyes shut as he fell into his memories of her, the way she smelled of lilac perfume, hair soft as it curled around his hand, her lips warm and breath sweet. The kindest person he had ever met, the kind of woman who believed him, trusted him, the woman he thought he may even one day mar—

A hand landed on his shoulder and he gasped in pain, as though each breath drew ice into his lungs. "Come on," Jack murmured, squeezing his shoulder.

Passing through the front door he felt a chill travel down his spine, aware of eyes following him as he walked. *Murderer, accomplice, psychopath.* These words followed him where ever he went, his actions pertaining to the trap and subsequent behaviour pulling his nature and sanity once more into question. Jack tried to push him up, to get him to quit the booze, to smile more, maybe adopt a new stray to renew his pack. But Will didn't want it, not when he felt he deserved every cruel word they could hurl at him. Besides how could one smile after losing so much?

Hannibal was gone, Alana too and Abigail—

He stumbled over his feet and two agents at the arch of the kitchen snickered. "Move along, boys." Jack growled, voice struggling to rise in decibels, however it offered him a new angle of intimidating, that voice low and threatening. The agents raised an eyebrow to each other before shrugging and moving back into the dining room.

Jack sighed as they moved into the kitchen and from the cloud of Will's darkness he felt pity for his friend who had fallen so far from grace. Kade Purnell had taken everything from him, stripping him of control. It was only through the Board's compassion for the loss of his wife and the innate fact that he *had* been right about Hannibal Lecter that he had maintained a position of authority within the bureau – but he was just another detective amongst the sea of others.

I forgive you Will – will you forgive me?

Will's eyes were glued to the stained floorboards as Hannibal's voice played in his head unable to control the aching grip those words had around his heart, eyes closing unconsciously as though he would see the man on the back of his eyelids. He exhaled slowly,

trying to be rid of the feelings simmering under the layers of alcohol in his system. Intoxication made the pain more manageable, creating an anesthetised fog that dulled the thoughts and guilt wailing beneath the surface of his mind. Yet sometimes, something pierced through to grasp and claw at his skin, tearing it away to bring it all flooding back.

The trap door before the fridge was open, a police officer peering down at the blonde head chatting insistently about the freezing temperatures of different liquid substances. "You'd be surprised by the way—Will!" Poking his head up, Jimmy Price beamed at him.

The attempted smile Will returned must have been dismal indeed based on the way Price's brows drew together in concern. "Zeller, Will's here." He called down the stairs and the scruffy man joined his partner, smile far too sympathetic for Will to handle.

He repressed a shudder, he could deal with hate and disgust, but pity was more kindness than he deserved. As Zeller opened his mouth to say something, a heeled foot stepped in between them, obscuring him from sight.

"Mr Graham."

The woman was dressed in a scarlet jacket over a plain blouse and black pencil skirt, blonde hair slicked back, her expression severe. She radiated power, spine straight and shoulders squared as she stared him down.

"Mrs Purnell." He mumbled in greeting, inclining his head slightly.

"Ms Purnell." She sniffed.

He gritted his teeth before releasing the tension with an exhale. "Ms Purnell, would you mind telling me why I'm here?"

She walked towards him, and over her shoulder he could see Price and Zeller exchange worrying glances. "You know Hannibal Lecter better than anyone." Her gaze burned as she assessed him, hands on her hips. "Your level of… *intimacy* is unmatched, which makes your insight valuable to me."

Will's eyes narrowed.

"This man has murdered twelve men and women across the country in no discernible pattern, taking the time to double back on multiple occasions to throw off any prediction of possible destination." She craned her neck, looking down her nose at him. "We need to understand where he's going, what his end game is. We have to stop him. The whole country is on alert."

He snorted, walking around her, eyes roaming over the kitchen now covered in a thin layer of dust. Hannibal would be horrified. "You won't catch him, we had one chance to catch him and you ruined—.

"You are walking on thin ice Mr Graham." She hissed and he looked derisively over his shoulder before sighing.

“Always am.”

“Will—.” Jack started.

“You wouldn’t even be here if Crawford had reasoned with me that you are by far the best chance we have at understanding what that sicko is up too. But believe me,” She walked up to him, invading his personal space so he had no choice but to meet her gaze. “I have my reasons why you know so much. You should have stayed in that cage where I first met you.” She sneered before turning around and grasping the folder off the bench.

His hand clenched into a fist as he tried to calm the anger boiling up inside him. He needed another drink.

“Now, the question is; why didn’t he start killing immediately?” Purnell asked the team, flicking through the papers before her.

“The wound—” Zeller began.

“Ah yes the wound,” She whipped around to Will once more. “On his thigh you said, you shot him in his right thigh? And yet no man was admitted with such a wound.”

He continued to stare at her even as she baited him. God, the woman was insufferable; she would have made a fine meal for Hannibal’s table. Eyes widening, Will retched, momentarily unable to breathe as though Hannibal’s hands were once more around his neck. Covering the sound with a cough, he leant against the counter, hand gripping the edge in support. “Ha-Dr Lecter is perfectly capable of tending to his own wounds.”

She scowled.

Jack turned away from Will slightly to murmur something to her. She quirked an eyebrow before locking her gaze with him and nodding. “That theory works well too, the news spurned him into creating a new wave of death.”

Will frowned. “What theory?”

Jack looked down, but Purnell turned to face him directly. “The renewal of Lecter’s murder spree correlates with the Tattlecrime report on Abigail Hobbs’ suicide.”

Will flinched.

“I- I…” Will frowned and pressed the heel of his palms to his eyes, trying to relieve the pressure building there. It would make sense, the article containing Freddie’s intrusive snapshot of his comatose and broken body had gained such popularity she had been hungry for more publicity, circling around the story of Hannibal Lecter and his beloved victims. She never made any promise to him to refrain from writing about Abigail and he supposed the news of her being secretly alive was too good to pass up, but what she had written about her…

Murderer, accomplice, psychopath. The words had been splashed across the headlines, every article detailing how Abigail had helped Hannibal the Cannibal, proving she

was the protégé of her father, or fathers as they now said. The result of such cruelty overwhelmed her, for since that day in the kitchen where her father ruined her, she never really broken the water's surface for air, endlessly drowning. And now she was gone.

At least Freddie alone had had the decency not to call her a coward.

In his silence his hands had begun to shake as he stared transfixed at the stained ground, eyes wandering over the outline of where his blood had pooled and dried. Detached, connected, drunk or itching, his mind was trapped within a fog, just waiting to be rushed by emotions and memories without a moment's notice. Recently alcohol had been unable to reduce the sporadic influx, but at least it made it easier not to care. Bracing his hands on the bench he hung his head, taking a deep breath. He knew who he was, he wasn't broken, but damn if he wasn't empty, following a lightless barren path.

Purnell looked Will over before she shook her head. "Bringing him here was useless; there is nothing that he can tell us about the scene that we don't already know. No victim for him to read apart from himself." She huffed, waving him away with a hand. "Take him home Jack, let him crawl back inside a bottle."

Jack frowned, looking disagreeable, but nonetheless nodded for Will to join him and left the room, casting one haunted glance to the pantry.

With a sigh Will began to trail after him, stopping at the hand on his forearm. Turning he found Price staring up at him, expression warm but he shifted nervously on his feet. "Look, I…there is nothing I can say to do anything, to make anything better but ah," He coughed and rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly. "I found something." He blurted out.

Will raised an eyebrow. "Why tell me?"

He pouted looking disgruntled. "I already told Purnell but she dismissed it as something over looked from the first and second inspections of the house." He leaned forward, voice low and conspiratory. "A book was left open on Lecter's desk in the study, Purnell thinks an officer must have left it out when cataloguing Lecter's collection, but the dust on the desk wasn't disturbed. Someone selected the book, opened it up to a specific page and laid it out carefully."

Will frowned. "What was the book and page?"

Price licked his lips. "The Iliad, Achilles' lament over Patroclus' death."

The chill was back, like dark eyes were watching him from the shadows.

***

He and Jack were silent in the drive home, no longer able to talk about what transpired that night. It had been a night they had lost so much, marking the beginning of this

spiral into desolation, death purging their lives of happiness. Each man would return to an empty house at the end of every day - if they even left it in the first place - and yet while their situations were so similar, they couldn't bear to speak to each other about it. Will suspected it was because deep down, Jack blamed him - heck he blamed himself. He had not just flirted with the enemy he had fallen in love with him and Jack damn well knew it.

"They're coming for you Will." Jack murmured some way into their drive.

"Randall Tier, I know."

"No, its more than that." His grip around the wheel tightened and Will watched the vein at his temple pulse. "They know you lied about the wound Will, blood work found inconsistencies with the splatter pattern and your supposed aim. You're covering for him, and they know it."

Will sighed, if they had asked him now he would have told them the truth, but blearily eyed and high on morphine he had still wanted Hannibal to escape, entertaining thoughts of joining him, or at least of escaping with Abigail. He knew the moment he saw her, heard those shaking words '*I just did what he told me to do*' that she would never be safe from the police. She had been an innocent, a symbol of hope to motivate him during his incarceration, but the living and breathing Abigail was doomed in the eyes of the law. He had hoped that Hannibal would end the bloodshed with him, taking his grief out of his body before leaving America with Abigail in tow – but he had underestimated just how far Hannibal was willing to go.

He wasn't sure what Jack wanted him to say to the news, or what was even the most appropriate reaction. Should he exclaim in shock, plead, ask him what he should do? He couldn't fathom what was normal anymore, besides would Jack even be able to help him – did he even want to?

"Too be fair I had suffered an incapacitating injury when I made that shot, so perhaps my memory was inaccurate – I'm just surprised I managed to hit him at all." He tried to joke, even chuckled a little, but it sound fake and distorted, perhaps a little unhinged.

The car returned to silence.

Arriving at his house, Jack followed him up onto the veranda, grasping his elbow as he made to go inside. "Look I shouldn't say anything, but Will, it's bad, real bad."

Will tried not to laugh, he really did, but even the horrified expression on Jack's face couldn't stem the harsh cackle spilling up from deep within his chest. *Bad.* How could anything get worse really? What more could be done to him – his freedom was superfluous now…hell, death would be better.

Jack had released his arm, looking uncomfortable as he swallowed deeply. "They know about the phone call you made to him Will. They think you warned him. "

"I did." The words fell from his mouth before he thought to hold his tongue. What would Jack think of if now, would he finally believe everything everyone around accused

Will of being. Or would he think it was his fault once more, that he had broken him?

But his friend's eyes widened, staring incredulous at him. Will wanted him to get angry, to strike him and fill the emptiness within him with something more than numbness and anguish – even physical pain. However Jack didn't strike, instead his expression fell. Another loved one with another look of betrayal.

"Why?" He breathed.

"Because I thought it might have save you." He stated, but winced, looking away shamefully. More Lies. "Because I wanted to save him…"

"Because you loved him? Even after—" Jack gritted his teeth. "Such a love is a sickness Will, to love someone so damaging, so wrong and monstrous. But you knew that, didn't you, and you chose it anyway?" He sounded defeated.

He sighed, shaking his head. "I can't protect you Will, not from this, not from yourself." With a tentative clap on the shoulder, Jack turned away, but Will saw the loss there, the moist clinging to his eyes. He had only caused this man, his friend more pain.

Will ground his teeth and opened the door, hands reaching out to glide through the air, as though the snouts of his beloved dogs were still there. He should have returned Jack's honesty and told him of what would occur tonight. Yet he held his tongue, perhaps to spare him of more pain? He wouldn't drag Jack back into this mess not when he was only beginning to pick up the pieces of his fractured life himself. No, this was something he needed to face alone.

Rummaging through his drawer he found his pistol from the New Orleans, older than the one he had registered (and recently revoked) from the FBI, but it would suffice. He shook his head as he shifted its heavy weight. He hadn't told Jack because wanted to see him, to look on that face and to have his beloved feel his rage, his grief this time and he wasn't prepared to let Jack take that away from him. Slipping a spare bullet into the pocket of his jacket he loaded up the pistol and sat down on the bed. One way or another, something would end tonight, something would give.

Reclining in bed, Will drifted, but he did not sleep, only dreamed with the bottle of whiskey beside him, pistol in hand. One of them would suffer tonight, but if he was honest, Will would welcome an end. An end to the misery alcohol could no longer colour in a haze of drunken euphoria, the dreams in which he saw Alana's broken body twisting and shaking to crawl to him, agony leaving her mouth agape to weep and plead for his help. Dreams, memories of Abigail sobbing underneath the hospital bed sheets, begging for freedom, for release. And amongst the worst of his nightmares were the dreams of Hannibal's caress, so tender filling him with warmth and love, those cursed moments of sweet kisses that left him waking in tears to empty sheets

Hannibal needed to finish the job, for both of them.

It was well past midnight when he heard the soft creaks of his floorboards. Such subtle quiet sounds could no longer be mistaken for his pack, each friend given away, even

Winston. Perhaps, it was for the best.

"Will."

Achilles had come home to him.

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Slipping into the quiet house, Hannibal breathed in the aroma of motor oil and dogs, aware of how subtle the final scent had become and how much stronger the smell of whiskey was. This house, holding its cloistered little secrets of a unique mind and soul felt wider than he remembered, emptier perhaps, lacking the warmth of Will's character personified by his loving pack. Adjusting quickly to the darkness Hannibal found Will resting on the bed, silent, eyes closed as he nursed the pistol in his hands waiting, waiting for him.

He knew Will would find the book whether he found his way to Hannibal's home like a lost lamb or was dragged there, he knew. Gazing over him now at the dark circles under his eyes and bottle in hand Hannibal wondered whether he too was troubled by that tugging ache in his stomach, gnawing as it begged to be reunited.

It was the only prominent feeling Hannibal could engage with recently, his mind devoid of pleasure, locked in a cold void cage, as though the cleansing touch of that fateful night's rainfall had curled around the heat of rage and anguish, sealing such passion untouchable. Even to himself. He was so hideously empty, as though it had been he who bled out over the floor that night.

In the beginning he had welcomed such numbness, finding it pleasant; free from the agony, free to pass hours of solitude in a hotel room dreaming of blue eyes, simply absorbing the beautiful images with detachment. Then, preparing to craft his future, he looked once more to his time in Baltimore and found his memories colourless, the emotions intangible, distant as though he saw them through water. As though they meant nothing. But he had conceived it for the best.

Then Abigail had died.

The news should have hit him with a dull muted pang at least, but he found nothing within him to feel grief, or victory at the news, just an unbearable silence that had driven him right into the path of a fiendish, vile man. Merciless in his destruction Hannibal felt nothing, deriving no satisfaction from consuming him, for ridding the world of his stain. He couldn't feel anything. Again and again he tried, but there was no pleasure to be found in the countless people feasted upon throughout America, his victory dull and pyrrhic.

Where once he had felt life with such a range of colour, this muted existence was slowly but surely driving him mad. He had never considered himself above emotion, balancing indulgence with a moderation that had always come with ease enabling him perfect

emotional execution. And yet now, in its absence he would give anything to once more be the mess of agony, the destructive grieving creature who had, in one fell stroke severed the binding ties to his loved ones. All except Will, who continued to haunt him.

Will occupied a place in his mind palace, face gentle, a fond and bittersweet smile on his lips as he held out shackles. Every time Hannibal looked upon him, memories of heated sweet kisses shared and the touch of callous fingers over his bare skin sprung to mind and he almost felt that he could grasp the feelings, taste the rich flavour of hunger on his lips before it faded once more into a passionless silence. With such a reminder of his emptiness, Hannibal avoided Will, plagued only when he slipped through the cracks into the unconscious darkness waiting.

Hannibal had lost more than he bargained for when he allowed Will to climb his guarded walls – but he was here to retrieve it. It had taken time to realise that the blue eyes of his dreams were a curse, one that had locked him in this demented place of silence. The barriers Will broke through would be refashioned from the assured loneliness that Will was dead – never again would another know the extent of Hannibal's vulnerability, and survive abusing it.

He flexed his wrist, moved by a twitch of irritation and a confusing concoction of impatience and hesitancy. He stared down at his hand incredulously, before releasing a breath of relief. Simply being in this room with Will the emotion began to bleed through the cold surface, filling Hannibal with a pooling warmth, like the sensation of coming home. Eager to feel more, he forgot the quiet caution of his steps and his foot slipped too far forward causing the floorboards to give a telltale groan.

Those blue eyes snapped open to search about the room, looking for a figure in the dark, gaze alert and calculated. Will shifted his legs over the edge of the bed, hand secured around his pistol. This time, no tremble was present, that grip sturdy and confident. Will meant to fight him, seeming a man determined.

His tongue chewed around words as he considered launching straight into attack, but the bullet Will harboured for him would not be so sweetly dealt the second time. He needed him to lower his guard.

Licking his lips, he sighed to his beloved. "Will."

***

Red eyes him watched ominously.

"Hannibal."

There were only two ways this could go, either one attacked or they spoke to each other, but every word, slur and curse Will had thought of in the month gone past flew from

his mind. Instead his mouth grappled to form vowels and sounds that could articulate how twisted he felt inside as he simply stared at those beautifully dangerous eyes. In the poor light Hannibal looked very much the same, though his clothes were far from the finery of his suits, casual in its cut of shirt and coat with dark jeans hugging his hips. Though his face was drawn, his hair had grown from its manicured style into longer jagged strands of soft silver that hung freely about his face. It was very becoming.

Will gritted his teeth, irritated at the speed in which he had managed to find himself drawn to the enigmatic man, once lover, always killer and now possibly his own murderer. He should feel the anxiety of fear or at least adrenaline in preparation of what was surely to come, instead he was struck by a quiet sense of anticipation. Hannibal too seemed equally affected by the static space between them, remaining still. In the deadly silence he watched him and Will felt the hair's on the backs of his arms stand at the intensity of that burning gaze.

"Will you forgive me?"

Will's eyes shot up in surprise and he looked to Hannibal who appeared equally astounded that the words had come from his mouth. His brows drew into a frown and Will's fingers itched to smooth out the crease lines made in his skin.

"No." He said instead, fingers gripping the gun base tighter. "Not for Alana," He stood, feeling the fire that had been spluttering in pangs of uncertainty, anger and grief for a month burn through him. "Not for Beverly. Not for Cassie Boyle. Not for Allison Richards, Sebastian Lynch and the countless others you murdered across the country." He hissed, glaring up at that dangerous man.

"Ah, was that their names?" A shark like smile stretched across Hannibal's mouth. "What need did I have for names, for interest in such dim creatures when I simply wanted dinner." He growled, teeth bared further in a leer.

Will recoiled.

This man was different. He lacked the polished refinement Will had come to expect. Wild in the abandonment of structure and social appearances, he had grown unhinged and predatory. Yet still he maintained an ingrained precision that saw him slink from shadows to bear down over Will with an enveloping darkness. As Will stepped back a sadistic flash of delight crossed the planes of Hannibal's face, however it didn't reach his eyes instead something broken and demented lingered there. Had Will done that or had Hannibal done it to himself? There was something longing about that look, as though he was struck by an absence that left him searching to fill it once more.

A thought crossed his mind. "You wanted more than that."

Hannibal raised a brow.

Moving across the room Will created more space between them, watching as Hannibal twisted to face him with every step. "You lost everything that made the Ripper unique. Those mindless, dull killings," He shook his head. "Those were just pleas of brutal

desperation to find it again, that elegance, that grace." When he reached the fireplace he stopped, fingers flexing around the gun. "You don't enjoy it anymore, do you?"

Hannibal's eyes narrowed. "Perhaps. However I have found a sure way to have it returned."

Will paused. Ah. "Tell me doctor Lecter – how would you do it?"

Will watched as Hannibal ran a moist pink tongue over his lips as though savouring his reply. "I would kill you with my hands." He hummed. "I was mistaken last time to try and detach myself from the intimacy your death deserved."

Will smirked. "But then you didn't really want me dead, did you? You weren't set on it, that's for sure." For a wound so visually traumatising it lacked the effectiveness of ensuring his death.

Hannibal frowned. "Forgiveness is such a profoundly conscious and unconscious state of affairs. What I showed you was not mercy, but an accidental clemency that overcame me and it was a mistake. I chose not to kill you for the indelible mark you left on me. For the forgiveness that took root in my mind without my consent." He seemed to be vibrating with agitation, rolling his shoulders as anger flowed off him in waves. "Yet it would have been easier for me if I had killed you. But you-,"He caught his voice on a breathless, strained note and he sighed.

"You changed me."

Will's heart ached at the admission. Hannibal seemed perfectly lost to the grips of his own cruel insanity, but this showed some of the human creature within, that steady beat of Hannibal's heart. It pulsed, still fresh and bloody in Will's hand where Hannibal had left it. A gift Hannibal could not reclaim, not matter how he wished to do so. It was Will's now to keep or ruin as he liked – he just hadn't decided which yet.

"That mistake led me here, to you. It cost me my pleasure, but I'm here to reclaim it."

Will smiled sadly as Hannibal released a deep breath, calm determination setting his form straight and rigid. Hannibal claimed he had lost his pleasure but Will could see it there in those tempestuous eyes. He had lost more than he was willing to let on, but the passion was not *gone,* only choked and constricted behind a door of his own making. Where Will had found the bottle, this had been Hannibal's retreat from reality, to sever the connection between his ability to express and feel. He hadn't let go.

Chained to the resounding calamity of that night, Will's survival had become the embodiment and solution to his own empty confusion. Driven, Hannibal planned to take Will's life to free himself, to close the chapter on the life he had fracture and left strewn in pieces. But would it even work? Their relationship, whatever it was, and whatever it had become was stitched into the blank spaces of their bodies. Even at a distance they were still fuelled by the knowledge that one individual out there understood them completely. Should one of them die, that light would be diffused and then, they truly would be alone.

“I won’t forgive you.”

Hannibal frowned.

“Not for Abigail.” He whispered, and watched the mask tighten around Hannibal’s face, clinic coldness slipping into place.

“The fault of Abigail does not lie with me.” Hannibal’s spoke with such a deliberate and detached tone that it returned the twitch to Will’s trigger finger, irritation leeching away any romantic nostalgia.

“Excuse me.” He raised the gun, levelling it to glare down the barrel at this twisted form of the man he loved. He may love him, but that didn’t mean he didn’t want to hurt him, that he didn’t want to see him bleed for all he had done.

“The chance was offered to—

A harsh bark of laughter escaped from the confines of Will's choked throat. “You offered me *nothing* without glided chains.” He spat. “You never accepted that my *love* for you - ” His voice caught, “because I do love you Hannibal, I fucking shouldn’t but I do.” He sighed, “You never accepted that my love for you might have boundaries of its own.” As his breath shuddered and hand dipped, Hannibal emerged from the shadows to take steady, collected steps towards him.

Lip curling, Will cocked the gun. “Stay. Still.” He growled, firing a round into the ground before Hannibal’s next step.

Hannibal sucked his teeth, but inclined his head, listening.

“You wanted everything I had, unstintingly… why didn’t you just show her to me?” His voice cracked.

If Hannibal had just revealed Abigail and allowed him the true chance to make a decision knowing everything that was on offer - they would have left together. Will was no fool. The prospect of a fugitive life with Hannibal alone held many complications, but for Abigail he would have bent to the necessity of it to ensure her freedom. As a man who loved Will for his mercurial nature, how could it have been that he had misjudged the use of Abigail, the surmount effect she would have had on Will’s decisions? Had Hannibal only told him that she lived, the worst of his anger and that unforgiving drive to see Hannibal punished would had flittered away. For Abigail alone they would have been family.

The illusion holding Hannibal’s face together in distant aloofness trembled, lips pulling up in a broken smile as his eyes softened. “Because you are beautiful, and terrifying to me.”

Will lowered his hand, frowning at Hannibal in confusion.

“Your beautiful mind presented me with the most conflicting of choices. With your appreciation of the cruel mechanisms of life and death you posed the only true threat to me,

as well as the true chance to be seen…to love. I needed your love's honesty, your confession of betrayal without your motivations being clouded." The trembling increased and he gritted his teeth, staring at Will with such pained intensity.

"I needed to know it was for me!" Hannibal's eyes squeezed shut, and when they open those sanguine depths glistened with a bitter fury. "I needed you to forgive me at my worst and still love me, to show her to you was impossible. You needed to want me on you own. You who were so capable of knowing me completely…wholly." He paused to look Will over for a moment. "I offered you the only chance to destroy me, and you took it."

Will lowered his head, body crippled by the strange almost childlike need radiating from this man, so sophisticated, so intelligent, so alone…. What sweet and cruel symmetry they shared.

Will swallowed this revelation, feeling its thick and bulbous edges stretch him within before he drew a weak breath. "Did you love her?" he whispered.

Hannibal straightened, closing his eyes as a tear slipped down his face. "More than you could possibly imagine."

Will shook his head, mind pulled apart by contradictions he could not fathom. "Then how could you kill her? How could you try to cut her down like…like she was nothing?" He choked.

"Beyond measure and wanton malice and matchless in his irony. Remember?"

"You are not god."

Hannibal sighed. "No, no I am not. But you believe in half-truths Will. Of me and of yourself. You believe you are a man of moral quandary and deem that I am not." He took the chance to move closer, and Will did not stop him. "You would be right of course, for it would be highly hypocritical for me to possess such qualms given my interests. But it is all relative. After all, another would perceive your behaviour, regardless of your rejection of me as a lack of morality. You would be aligned as someone of my calibre, perhaps you already have been."

Hannibal assessed him then and Will ground his teeth, unable to deny all he had claimed was true. The police would come for him, one way or another, for justice was blind to moral relativism.

Hannibal smirked. "They will take you because they fear how much we are alike, because they fear you for the same potential I adored. Here, now, there is only one path I can offer you. I will not see you caged as you wished to see me, I'll spare you that again. My gift, for a love that only earned your regret."

His regret?

Hannibal was close enough now that Will could see his chin was shadowed with a short scruff as those words hung between them, thick with warning and a kind of loving

malice. He offered him freedom in death. To be taken in those arms again and released. Wasn't that what Will had been waiting for? Hadn't he been waiting for Hannibal to return and end what he could not, no matter how many times he looked to the gun, to the pills?

This past month of alcoholism and despair, Will had agreed with Hannibal, death was by far preferable. He was consumed with the idea of it, of suicide, of somehow calling out Hannibal to finish the deed. Perhaps Hannibal had known, both of them still playing little games with each other, Hannibal with his *Iliad* book and Will with his empty home, waiting. This was a stage they had set up together, this was supposed to be the night, the conclusion to their fucked up tragedy – but Will wanted to change the script.

No - he may have entertained the freedom death would grant him, but Will did not wish to die, not when looking at Hannibal flooded him with a possession to keep something what was solely his, no matter how doomed and toxic. Will would not allow Hannibal to be rid of him, not when the corruption of him ran so deep that even now, tendrils of warmth ignited the blackness of his heart that still loved him without regret. He felt fire, he felt determination and passion. He was not a victim to Hannibal's persuasion anymore.

He did not regret them. He should, by god he should, but he had been happy.

"I don't regret us." He smiled. "But I'll spare us nothing. We deserve a cage Hannibal." Taking his eyes off him for a moment, Will looked to his gun, flicking the safety off.

With astounding silence, Hannibal was suddenly before him and his arm shot out to grab the hand secured around the gun. Will stared at him with wide eyes.

"Thank you." With a whisper Hannibal wrenched the gun from his grasp, before bending to swing his foot around, knocking Will's legs out from underneath him. As he fell, Hannibal took hold of his shirt to pull him away from the fireplace, sending him sprawling across the floor instead. He gasped, his nose pressed against the carpet that smelt distinctly of his dogs as he felt feet settled on either side of him.

Rolling onto his back he saw Hannibal looming above, contemplating the gun in his hands. Head reeling, Will knew he had to get to his phone; he needed to get Jack here before one of them wound up killing each other.

Disengaging the clip, Hannibal tipped the bullets out to drop them down onto his chest, a childish insult to injury before he tossed the gun across the floorboards. Will's eyes followed it, watching as it bounced off a wall and ricocheted into the kitchen, recalling the weight of a single bullet, still tucked into the fold of his jacket. Grunting as a weight settled on his ribs and compressed his lungs, he bucked his hips. Stretching his hands out he tried to throw Hannibal off to the side but his wrists were caught, splintering pain shooting down his arms as that strong grip forced them over his head, gravity working to Hannibal's favour.

Secured down by a single grip, Hannibal wound a hand around his throat, giving a hollow laugh as he rode each jolt and thrust Will gave in vain. Sweat beading at every pore, dread begun to set in when suddenly the hand around his neck was released. A fist came out of nowhere and he felt blood burst from his nose, top lip splitting against the sharp edge of

his tooth. Eyes clenched shut in pain he groaned, tasting the steady trickle of blood running down his face. There was a hum from above, before he jumped at a warm tongue sliding up his jaw to suckle on his top lip. Vision blurred by tears he felt the tickle of Hannibal's fringe, the sharp rasp of hair grazing over his chin as he drew away. Blinking furiously Will saw a beast staring back, blood smeared across his lips, silver scruff stained and eyes so dark and intoxicating. Even in his pain and danger, Will wanted to kiss him.

He really was sick.

Will choked as fingers dug into his pulse and a flash of white crossed his vision. Lips caressed his mouth once more, foreign words murmured into his skin in a loving pray as the world began to warp, scattered black dots encompassing whole sections of his sight. As those lips fell to kiss his eyes Will clenched his fists and propelled his head forward, slamming his forehead into that sharp cheek and aquiline nose. Hearing a resounding crunch, Hannibal's hands released him in surprise and with a powerful jolt Will dislodged him. As Hannibal reeled in pain, Will gasped and struggled to his feet, stumbling to the kitchen.

Grabbing his phone off the table side, he quick dialled Jack, searching wildly for the gun in the dark. Spying it by the corner, he snatched it up, loading the precious bullet into the clip as Jack responded.

"Will-?"

"Hannibal, Jack! He's here, I—!" Thrown forward into the bench, the phone fell to clatter to the ground, bright light indicting the call was still being received. With the phone casting light up to the ceiling, Hannibal looked positively murderous, blood streaming down his neck and down the front of his clothes.

"That was rude, Will."

As he launched for him once more, Will responded automatically, clipping him under the chin and grasping the offending limb. Sacrificing the gun, he bent and twisted, rotating Hannibal's arm until the shoulder gave an audible pop and Hannibal cried out. Yet he kept coming, like a man possessed he rammed Will into the fridge, good hand twisted within his curls to yank his head back. Hannibal smiled then and buried his head into Will's neck as Will attempted to pull the fingers from his locks.

"Tell me Will, would you ever say to me 'Stop. If you loved me, you'd stop'?" He rested his head there, body crowded close as though they were in an embrace.

Will winced in pain and looked to the ceiling. "Not in a thousand years."

"Not in a thousand years…" He moaned before running his teeth over Will's pulse. "That's my boy."

"I'm really going to miss you. But first, you've cut my time a lot shorter with that call, so be a good boy and let me see it."

Will froze, confused as Hannibal released him and stepped back. They paused in silence, Will panting against the cold surface of the fridge, brows narrowed in caution as Hannibal assessed him. After a moment, Hannibal nodded to himself, pleased. “Good boy.”

Taking his left forearm into his hand he elevated the limb, slowly twisting it while Will watched with sick fascination as the shoulder blade rotated. Shifting it to an awkward angle, Hannibal gritted his teeth before giving a push and the distended bone popped back into the socket with a resounding clunk. Craning his neck to either side, Hannibal to a deep breath, eyes opening to fixate on where Will remained, flattened to the fridge.

Will gasped as those cold long fingers settled on his stomach, shifting to move under the fabric of his shirt. Sliding along the tender scarring, Hannibal gave a small satisfied sigh. Bracing his hands on Hannibal’s biceps Will pushed, protesting as he tried to force away those intimate hands, lovingly caressing the wound from beginning to end.

“Now, now Will.” A hand slipped down to cup his groin and Will bared his teeth, furious that his body had been aroused by the simplest of the man’s touches. He supposed though it wasn’t quite so simple, the possessive drag of his fingers making him feel owned, desired. Born from violence the mark was in essence, evidence of Hannibal’s claim on him, a mark he would bear till his death.

Once more Hannibal had managed to take command of his full attention, overriding his instincts of flight, just like that night when he surrendered to Hannibal’s rage. His hands fell limply to the side as Hannibal lowered them down onto their knees, leaning Will back as he pulled the shirt further up. Sprawling his thighs out to lower himself, Hannibal dipped down, tongue peeking out to worship the taut angry skin. Will watched him without objection hips unconsciously thrusting forward with every arousing suckle from that plump mouth.

With a sigh he looked to the ceiling, weaving a hand through those long silken strands. “When I awoke, all I felt was pain. It should have been from the ache in my gut, the taut stitches threaded through my flesh trying to hold the pieces together. But it was that absence. I knew in that moment what you had taken from me. And what you had given to me.”

“You’re a creature of pleasure, Hannibal, and you gave me so much.” Will stroked his face and neck a shade too hard; touch bruising as he followed the bone and tendons to dig into the spaces of soft flesh in between. There was a desperation to his actions, the part of him that longed for this, this feeling, this connection. He had been so disconnected from the world, free falling with no anchor. Now returned, Hannibal still felt like his anchor, a dark and terrible anchor. So twisted he was immediately drawn to the intimacy Hannibal offered, despite the violence that had just passed - maybe even because of it for theirs was a love of cruelty and art.

Circling his hands around Hannibal’s face he pulled him from his ministrations, gazing down at that breath-taking expression with wonder. His lips were parted, shining with the remaining flecks of blood and saliva, eyes heated and enamoured. Now would be the one and only chance Will would have to kill him, the man so completely consumed by his hedonism to focus.

He ran a thumb down his cheek, breath hitching at the way Hannibal pressed into his palm. “Just look at you, immersed in the pleasure you had thought you lost here, with me.”

Those hands gripped him tightly as cloudy red eyes tried to blink away the fog incapacitating him. Looking down at that striking face of the man he loved, he felt his breath bloom and rise to put a choking pressure on his throat as he held it.

Hannibal had ruined him for the world, bathing him in a light that everyone saw as pure darkness. They all said he was drowning in it, but he had been drowning without it. There may come a time where he would be free to love another, to love many but this *devotion* would never again be shared. Will knew now that his soul would only ever find comfort in that light as blood stained and tortured as it was. His body would cling forever to the sole purpose of ensuring it never faded. It was almost…religious, extraordinary and harrowing.

He smiled when he should have been crying.

Leaning down, Will reached past Hannibal to grasp the cold handle of the gun as he took that bottom lip in between his teeth. Hannibal moaned and Will bit down, worrying the indents he made, free hand cupping his head as he moved to deepen the kiss. Shuddering, Hannibal gripped him close, tongue slipping past slack lips to taste the depths on Will’s mouth, swipes fluid and rhythmic as they locked together.

Swallowing the breath of air Hannibal tried to draw Will pursued him with relentless kisses, air a far lower priority to this feeling. He was not ready to give up this dark sweetness he had been craving. And yet he had to. Finally breaking apart, they panted against each other, slick lips grazing with each exhale. As Will’s finger found the trigger he squeezed his eyes shut and he braced himself.

“I forgive you.” He breathed and pulled the trigger, watching as those soft eyes widened in pain and shock, their colour like liquid ink in the spare light.

Hannibal’s breath stuttered, mouth opened in pain as his eyes fluttered shut falling forward into his arms. For a while they were silent as Hannibal gasped through the pain, hand held to his stomach where blood steadily slipped through his fingers. Pressing his cheek to Hannibal’s head he swept aside the dampening locks as he nursed him in his arms.

Slipping down the fridge, Will splayed his legs out to cradle around Hannibal’s body as he lay there, breathing labouring. “You asked me ‘Why, then?’ that night. When you asked me to run away with you.”

He shifted him in his arms and Hannibal groaned, hand gripping his shirt as he tried to gain some leverage, to pull himself up, to get away, to not be vulnerable. But tremours had begun to quake through him as shock began to set and he collapsed to pant against Will’s chest, cheek pressed to his heart.

Will wrapped an arm around his beloved, blinking the tears from his eyes and he placed his other hand over the bullet wound in Hannibal’s gut. “Your blade asked me again.

And now your eyes, they're asking me again, but I think you know the answer, I think you always did."

"Because we are alike?" Hannibal whispered, body relaxing to drift in Will's arms, red eyes watching him intently.

Will bent to kiss him once more, finding the response gentle but far from feeble. "Because you are beautiful and terrifying." Cradling Hannibal's head Will saw the grimace transform into a soft, peaceful smile as his eyes fell shut.

*

To love is to be vulnerable ~ C.S Lewis

*

Chapter End Notes

Whudda think? xx
Elliearna

Daijuurokushō

Chapter Notes

Hello guys, sorry this one took a while, exams and my birthday, plus I deliberated a lot over what scenes I wanted to keep, and what I wanted to move forward or get rid of! Also its a little on the recounting/recollecting side of things to fill you in on whats happened and the dynamics and...stuff :P I'm really bad at these, but anyway I hope you enjoy!

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"*Wouldn't we be quite the pair?*—you with your bad heart, me with my bad head. Together, though, we might have something worthwhile."

~ Zelda Fitzgerald, "Letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald," 20 Dec. 1940

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When Jack came upon them later, they lay together like lovers.

Will's arms were wound around Hannibal, clutching him close as though fearful he would slip through his fingers should Will be found wanting in heat, in connection, in love and in reason to live. Cheek pressed against Hannibal's bowed head, Will buried his nose amongst the wet silver strands to draw a deep breath. How many times had Jack done the same to Bella, nestled his face in her tresses to surround himself with the aroma of her. Too many. Not enough. And here Will shivered with that same desperation, his arms the kind of vice that tried to draw Hannibal within himself. The kind of desperation that would dare a man to fight even death to keep them together.

But in the end it was Jack who would have to draw them apart and see the heartbreak in Will's eyes. Running a hand over his face, Jack signalled to the men just outside the door to lower their arms – it was all finally over, just not for Will. Hannibal had always held sway over him - but how could it be that Will loved the killer through the agony he had caused? Love may know no bounds - but why the monster? Alana Bloom had loved Hannibal, Jack

too had loved the man in his own way, but Will had loved him far more -even knowing what he was, he had loved the monster.

Hannibal didn't look like a monster now. Just a man in his lover's arms.

Back nursed against Will, Jack watched Hannibal's chest rise and fall, face a sickly pallor, sweat pooling to the surface of his skin. Will's lips murmured breathless words against his forehead, squeezing the hand interlocked with his own, pressing it over the wound in Hannibal's torso.

With a sigh, hazy blue eyes dragged their way from the silent form in his arms to smile weakly at the stunned detective. "I think now would be a good time to confess to the murder of Randall Tier."

Though his smile was taut, the composition of Will's expression was almost sweet. Tranquil. He looked more at peace than Jack had ever seen. Heaving a great breath the detective crouched down on the floor some steps away from them and took off his hat.

Hannibal drew a pained breath, throat clicking with the sound of thickened liquid, yet his knitted brows smoothed out as Will pressed closer. It seemed love was a toxin to them both. Jack stared at the face of his once friend, just now seeing the blood splattered about his mouth like the red muzzle of a ravenous animal. He recalled Hannibal's smile, the warm comfort he had found in the lines it made in his face and in the broad stretch of curiously shaped lips over sharp, seemingly harmless teeth. Had that mouth always been so ravenous? Underneath all the kind acts and genuinity, had he always been ravenous for violence and death?

Hannibal had been his friend, unfortunately far more than he considered Will. A man of pleasure, his life, his friendship had been an illuminating seduction for Jack, but more than that, he had provided Jack with a renewed perspective on the beauty of his own life, as cold as it had grown. Hannibal had insinuated himself deeply into Jack's life to a point that even now, Jack would feel the absence of him. Yet he was a simple man. He could separate himself from what Hannibal had offered him and what he had taken away without being plagued by remorse and forgiveness. Unlike Will's blinded love.

Yet maybe he wasn't blind.

Will had a sickness, one that Jack thought he had tamed and utilised, but perhaps he had allowed it to take root and blossom. Maybe that was the cost of catching Hannibal Lecter. Or maybe it had always been there, waiting to be loved. And Hannibal had loved him, and hurt him, and Will had returned in kind. Perhaps that was why Will had chosen the *monster* over himself, over everything else.

Jack looked at the two of them, before taking in Will's empty, lonely little house of empty whiskey bottles, feeling the weight of the warrant for his arrest in his pocket and thought a little sadly –without Hannibal, what else did Will have?

He sighed and watched as Will lowered his head once more, pressing a kiss to that cold damp scalp and Hannibal moaned weakly in reply.

“Yes, yes perhaps it is.” Jack passed a hand over his weary eyes.

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“Good morning Mr Graham.”

“If you say so.” Will groused to the man peering at him from the other side of the bars.

Fap. fap. fap.

Chilton looked to his right with a sneer of disgust. “Stop that.”

Fap. fap. fap.

“Miggs. Stop that now.” A voice spoke from further down the hall, its levelled timbre straightening Will’s spine with an unconscious shiver.

One terrified whimper gave way to silence.

“This facility does not require your input Mr Lecter.” Chilton hissed.

“It would certainly benefit from it.” The voice drawled on with a derisive sigh. “And it is still Doctor Lecter until they revoke my license.” There came a chuckle. “But then, you already knew that didn’t you? Taking care to ferry all those articles and letters requesting my help, my *professional* opinion like a good little secretary.”

Chilton turned a vibrant scarlet at the scathing tone.

Will rolled his eyes.

It was a constant pissing contest between the two of them, one that Hannibal won every time – much to Chilton’s chagrin. Weary of incarceration Hannibal took far too much enjoyment from degrading the man, ruining his retorts with wit gathered from just the bare shallows of his mind. Chilton was lucky Hannibal reserved his more destructive tendencies, preferring to use the man for verbal exercise. Whether Hannibal was impressed by the man’s ability to survive the trap he had set was unclear, but he was certainly vocal about enjoying the chance to kill him again. And he was prepared to wait, regardless of how long it would take, Hannibal remaining ever a man of patience.

But Chilton’s wore thin very easily, daily in fact.

Whenever stirred into a fuss, he threatened Hannibal with electroconvulsive therapy - never to follow through of course. Shock treatment was *saved* for only the most violent of cases or as a last resort and Hannibal fortunately met neither contingency. He had been calm and mostly passive…physically at least, save one early incident. But Will was sure Chilton

would employ his unorthodox ways around informed consent and paperwork should Hannibal push him too far.

"If you continue to defy me Hannibal you'll be—."

"Returned to solitary? Or more of your empty threats of shock treatment?" There was a melodic laughter that rang hollow through the cold brick. "My dear Frederick, you reserve repetition for patients who show favourable reactions." He tutted and Chilton ground his teeth. "You really didn't take your education seriously. Where did you get that ink stained piece of paper in your office again?"

Will sighed, sitting up to rest his head against the wall as Chilton stalked down the hall to confront Hannibal. The level of mental torture Hannibal inflicted on their director was astounding. Chilton's sessions with Hannibal always dissolved into a cold war of bitter contempt, Hannibal reducing every psychology test given to him into fine piece of origami with a smile. Yet his meddling ways didn't stop there. During Will's sessions with Chilton, Hannibal took it upon himself to contradict every remark and opinion Chilton voiced.

He was a bit of a snot about it too.

Hannibal's prattling faded into white noise as Will closed his eyes, filling his mind with the sound of running water, the rhythmic clicks of his line, nature chattering about him. Bliss was broken at a loud thud and Will's eyes flew open, hearing a startled shriek echo in the hall as Chilton's cane came clattering to the ground. Will gave a exacerbated huff. Chilton frequently paraded himself along the bar lines, a favoured technique of his to assert himself as the keeper of caged madmen. Unfortunately for Chilton, such false regality and egotism did not discourage Hannibal, rather it sharpened his resolve, provoking him to diminish the feeble man.

"Control yourself you animal!" Chilton's voice shook. Ever the tumultuous caged devil, Will imagined Hannibal had thrown himself up against the glass in a rare strike of barbarity, Chilton promptly wetting himself in the scramble away.

Poor Frederick.

As much as he would like to electroshock him, Hannibal was the most famous case of cannibalism. With his pathology still a mystery, Chilton wasn't quite willing to risk the consequences of interfering with his chances to figure him out. Hannibal Lecter had been named every label under the sun, the hype from psychiatrists, neuroscientists and sycophants severely impacting the speed of his conviction. But finally, when their insanity plea was granted, he and Hannibal had entered Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane to find Frederick Chilton waiting for them. And Hannibal had thrown his head back and laughed, the sound echoing off the walls, the guards' hand flying quick to their baton as he'd keeled over still giggling.

Yes, Will believed Hannibal would very much like to kill Chilton.

"Would you like another run in with sodium amytal?" Chilton warned.

“Why? Feeling peckish?” Hannibal chuckled. “Who will you ask after this time? I did once make a fantastic quiche from liver, an acquaintance of yours I believe. I could give you the recipe right now if you’re so inclined?”

Whenever Hannibal’s antics proved too much, Chilton took a special delight in pumping him full of all kinds of drugs –none of which actually worked to his benefit. Although there was likely some pleasure that came from the ones that left Hannibal puking into the toilet throughout the night. Granted the killer was always twice as vicious come morning. The last encounter with sodium amytal, a kind of scientific truth serum, had been a disastrous failure, the attempt to locate a Princeton student resulting in a gleefully given recipe for dip.

Of course Will hadn’t heard of this from Hannibal himself, rather the guards mumbling in fear of the Cannibal in their midst.

No, Hannibal refused to speak to him, save a few simple words when absolutely necessary. It frustrated Will, yet he didn’t know how to start any form of conversation. What did two men such as they say to each other after all they had experienced? What could they say to each other when bars and concrete contained them from sight and smiles and any possible gentle or cruel touch? Hannibal may feel the same, but Will believed his silence was held by a degree of petulance, a punishment for Will’s betrayal. Regardless of what the alternative for them would have been, this cage was not a gift Hannibal would thank him for.

Four months had passed since their incarceration but Hannibal had yet to forgive him, his silent distain a cruelly wielded weapon of agony. And yet, Will had to wonder, amongst his pining –had he even truly forgiven Hannibal? For what the events Hannibal had put into motion had forced Will to do, forced their daughter to feel – had those words of forgiveness really been true?

Here Hannibal was a vicious creature, a man of icy smiles and barbed words cutting deep to release just a breath of the barely contained rage within. A bound monster who was patient in his cruel decisions and machinates, he somehow felt more real to Will than the elusive almost ethereal man he had been when free. Will found he ached all the more for him this way. The lingering burn of Hannibal’s lashing prose filled the spaces between them with heat and Will curled down on his wish for such cruel words to be turned on him. Anything would be better than the silence.

He didn’t want to be alone.

He didn’t want to be without him.

In the end Will got everything he had expected. He was with Hannibal in a place his beloved could no longer cause damage just as he had wished. Yet the man held him at an unforgiving distance, merciless of what the solitude would do to Will’s mind. To know Hannibal was so near, yet oceans away from him dulled every sense in his body, leaving him to putter about his cell and mind. But Abigail too often waited for him there and he had yet gathered the courage to interact with her, fearful of her judgement. Such were the holes in his mind. Instead, to pass the countless hours of disregard, he did little but watch water trickle from leaks in the roof, following them as it wove its way down through the cracks in the wall.

This was Hannibal's punishment for him and perhaps karma's too for having chosen a love that came with knives and agony. A love that offered fresh poison with every turn they took. Was happiness even something two creatures such as they could even be content with?

Lying back down on the bed, Will listened as Chilton fumed in the background, Hannibal's words cutting him so effortlessly, so infective with their execution he knew the deep bruise it would leave on the man's insecurities. He rolled onto his side. For a man so furious with his incarceration, Hannibal certainly enjoyed the freedom it gave his tongue, showcasing its talent to Chilton and the guards –the courtroom too had seen its fill.

Hannibal should have received the death penalty as a man so insanely sane. Will recalled the quiet of the room, the heavy chains about his wrists and the hard bench beneath him as everyone looked to the man at the stand. Where others recoiled in horror, chills running across the skin of each member for the sheer calm confidence with which Hannibal admitted to being the Ripper, Will had been mesmerised. He had been present as Jack's last ditch effort to convince him to testify and save himself, but he had no intention of doing any such thing, wishing only to see his beloved on stage.

The room had hung on Hannibal Lecter's every word, victims' families waiting for justice, searching the perfect composition of Hannibal's face for some indication of remorse in his relaxed confession. Though forgiveness would never be rewarded, it was human of them to pray that even the most evil of individuals could regret their decisions. They longed to make him more human, easier to judge - and far less frightening.

But Hannibal gave them no satisfaction.

Through all the convoluted questions thrown at him, he had remained unnervingly placid and so utterly unapologetic for his behaviour that he had seemed alarmingly sane. He had however remained silent when his professional opinion on the plea of his insanity was requested. Will on the other hand had scoffed at the question, drawing the gaze of the room and attention of the papers. It was then that he had shared his final smile with Hannibal, those tight lips relaxing as the corners lifted. Lecter was not insane. Insanity was an unsoundness of the mind that skewed an individual's ability to abide by social and moral laws because they could not grasp control of their actions in a reality that escaped them.

But Hannibal Lecter had always been in control, having a perfect understanding of reality. He merely abided by his own standard of laws.

As their locked gaze had dropped away, Hannibal's lawyer worked to paint him as a model citizen with his polite and unobstructive manner, extrapolating on his contributions to society. The jury grew confused to be worked from such an angle for a man pleading insane. That was until Hannibal's lawyer had turned the image to reveal a man who slaughtered countless innocents for the simple action of rudeness, torturing them without mercy for his sanctity as an apex predator. Hannibal had grimaced at being labelled like a villain from a serial novel, but it had served its purpose, the jury had been completely convinced Hannibal was insane.

After Hannibal's conviction Will's trial came to court, but his rejection of Jack's request to testify had more or less guaranteed a guilty charge. Yet his refusal to testify against

his manipulator had worked to his favour of pleading insane, the damage and abuse suffered leaving him in a state of mental instability. Jack had tried to ease the sentence by detailing the plan to entrap Hannibal but it had fallen on flat ears. The jury believed him to be entirely infatuated with Hannibal Lecter and still deeply under his influence presenting as a danger to himself and society.

Blessedly convicted guilty but insane for the murder and mutilation of Randall Tier, difficulties had arisen in his pursuit to stay by Hannibal's side. Jack had testified to the importance of separating Will from Hannibal should any psychiatric institution hope to see any improvement in him. However, Chilton who had already been granted Hannibal's 'residency' without the killer's knowledge had disagreed, outlining the importance of their proximity, prattling on about his grand schemes to break Will free of Hannibal's sickness. It was the final remark of Will's value as a tool to cracking Hannibal's pathology that could potentially lead to the discovery of his victims' bodies that finally secured them each a cell at BSHCI.

Fat load of good it was doing considering they weren't talking.

Returning to stand before his cell, Chilton lifted his head with a sniff, grip flexing around his cane. "Our session with have to resume tomorrow Mr Graham."

Hannibal laughed yet again, the cruel and ugly sound following the defeated man out. Sighing Will settled down into his bunk, locking his hands behind his head as he imagined the gentle tendrils of water lapping about his leather clad thighs, taking care not to think of Abigail lest he summon her phantom to haunt him.

Fap. fap.

His eyes snapped open at the tell-tale sound.

"*Miggs*."

Will shivered at the cold emptiness of that voice, tone devoid of humour and Miggs whimpered before returning to his low muttering.

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Will gritted his teeth as the cold bite of metal clasped around his wrists, striking up memories of hopelessness, of his struggle to keep hold of his sanity when the whole world believed he'd already lost it. How ironic that his return here would see him far less damaged? Though his mind remained a tormented place, he was not broken, not anymore.

His iniquities had rewarded him in the end with a love as cruel as it was rare.

Drawn from his cell, the guards escorted him towards the shower block, pausing by Miggs' cell at the moans coming from within. Rattling the door, the guard called in and Will

leaned forward in concern to look at Miggs who writhed and shuddered on his side. The man had suicidal tendencies, ones that had apparently increased due to the emotional stirring and experiments Hannibal had taken to testing on him in fits of boredom.

"Miggs?" He probed before those beady eyes snapped up to hold his gaze, mouth wide open in ecstasy.

"Pretty boy *oooo*!" He shouted, hand flying into the air.

Unaware that he had flung something through the bars, Will was smacked straight across the face, recoiling as semen dripped into his eyes, hanging from his curls.

"*Will!*"

Stumbling violently as the shot blurred his vision, he fell against the perspex glass of Hannibal's cell, immediately feeling the man's proximity as his name fell once more from his lips. Trying furiously to clear the filth from his eyes he felt Hannibal's presence leached through the glass, humming with anger.

"*Miggs*." He growled and Will blinked up at him to see the wide eyed rage bubbling to the red surface.

As the guards wrenched him to his feet he saw Hannibal start up, body pressing closer to the glass as he gritted his teeth before retreating back and adopting an expression of perfect calm. Staggering on his feet, Will continued to try and wipe away the semen from his face as he was pulled towards the shower block. Glancing back he saw Hannibal's mouth twitch, upper lip rising into a curling sneer as his neighbour dissolved into a hysteric cackling.

When he returned later, Miggs was snivelling and Hannibal watched Will with a bright intensity that filled his stomach with warmth. There was a certain relief that came with finally garnering the man's attention, filling the empty spaces of isolation where doubt had begun to fester. Such a simple look affirmed why he had chosen this path. Imprisoned separately their minds would have grown hopeless in stagnation, but together they could find some peace - or as much as two monsters such as they deserved.

Locked back into his cell Will closed his eyes and smiled. He slept easy that night, soothed by the memory of an unkempt face and sanguine eyes.

But by morning Miggs was dead.

Will paced as the BSHCI staff moved about, removing the body and cleaning the space. He lingered by the bars, hoping to catch a glimpse of the corpse to somehow understand and debunk the theory forming in his head. He shouldn't have been surprised or upset that Hannibal had a hand in this, but, well he was. He felt a weight of responsibility for the thought that Hannibal had perhaps done this for him.

He gritted his teeth and wrinkled his nose as the smell of disinfectant filled the air. No it wouldn't be for him, not really. It was for Hannibal's claim on him as much as it was for Miggs' rudeness.

The tell-tale tap of a cane perforated the room and Will pressed up against the bars, calling out. “Chilton, what happened?”

Frederick paused but did not meet his gaze. “Sleep apnea - he choked on his own tongue.”

“Wait-“

Ignoring him, Chilton continued past the vacant cell to stand before Hannibal and Will craned forward to hear the exchange over the scuffles from next door.

“So you coerced him into killing himself.” Chilton stated bluntly.

There was a deliberate sigh and Chilton drew closer to the opposing wall, away from what Will could only assume was Hannibal’s approach. “We simply had a conversation.”

Will’s throat clenched. *Bastard.*

“Why?”

“Is this a session now Chilton?”

“*Dr* Chilton.”

Hannibal hummed.

“Why did you ‘converse’ with him?”

Will arched a brow, Chilton was learning.

“I felt it was imperative that he apologised to Mr Graham for his unspeakably ugly behaviour.” The tone was dismissive.

“That wasn’t for Graham’s benefit.”

“Wasn’t it?” His voice dropped a level in warning.

“You consider Will yours, almost animalistically, despite how you ignore him. Miggs wasn’t just rude – doing that to Will was a humiliation for you both.” Chilton seemed tired, defeated as he worried his forehead. “I know you’re afraid of. It’s not pain, or solitude. It’s indignity you can’t stand, Hannibal, you’re like a cat that way.”

Will raised his eyebrows in surprise, having to give Chilton credit when it was due; after all that was perhaps the sharpest analysis the frankly incompetent director had ever given.

Hannibal laughed and Chilton visible tried to refrain from recoiling further into the wall. Will too shuddered, the hairs on his arms rising. He knew that laugh, knew the unhinged grin full of menacing teeth that accompanied the chilling sound.

As Chilton began to walk away Hannibal called out once more. “Give me Will.”

“Excuse me?” Will said incredulously.

“No-”

“Then I shall have to remove my next neighbour, and the next and –I doubt I need to elaborate.”

Chilton gritted his teeth. A threat like that from such a notorious murderer in a house of unstable individuals could not be ignored. Chilton could not afford to call his bluff – Will certainly wouldn’t risk it. Unfortunately Hannibal could not be permanently confined to a padded cell, not when he was still so highly sought after, countless papers requesting his input, researchers and journalists crawling over each other just for the chance to talk to him. Will sighed in sympathy as Chilton’s face twisted, the inner turmoil breaking to the surface of his skin, a bead of sweat slipping down his temple.

“Have that cell ready by noon.” He ordered, turning on his heel.

“*Chilton.”*

Chilton looked murderous as he stopped before Will’s cell, knuckles turning white around the head of his cane. “Collect your things in preparation Mr Graham.” He sneered, voice constricted as if the words had actually hurt him.

Wounded his pride perhaps.

Throwing his head up, he gave Will a mirthless, bitter smile and stalked out of the block, the steady rhythm of his footsteps fumbling as Hannibal called out softly.

“*Good boy.”*

Will rested his head against the bars.

Somehow, they would surely pay for this.

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Will was moved into Miggs’ cell, but Hannibal did not escape unpunished.

For his hand in the ‘suicide’, he was forced to watch religious programming. However in further retaliation, he held onto a document that Chilton had mistakenly passed on within his own mail, having the audacity to open the document and read the rejection letter out loud during their next session. Hannibal did return the paper. *Eventually.* But not without first turning it into an extravagant piece of origami.

It was at that point that Will accepted that for all his sophistication, Hannibal Lecter was a child. And *still* not talking to him.

He lost his toilet seat for that particular incident, but it seemed to draw a ceasefire between them. However, another problem arose with the guards, in particular, a fine specimen of bigotry and megalomania that made him the perfect substitute for Hannibal's entertainment.

When they had first arrived, Hannibal had been treated much like a live wire, his daily routine of showers and meals perfectly choreographed, guards on high alert for the man they had heard was a true monster unlike any they had housed. However Hannibal had behaved without incident, keeping his silence while he learnt the names and behaviours of the men around, storing the information for the right time to play them like a fine instrumentalist.

They had been less cautious of Will, however their tongues took to wagging over the scandal of the Cannibal and the Agent in their midst. In a moment of particularly crude gossiping and foul words Hannibal had taken it upon himself to bite off a young guards' tongue and swallow it before his eyes. Needlessly to say, as well as earning himself an outdated leather muzzle as punishment, he also attracted the guards' fear –and their cruelty. Yet Will suspected he enjoyed it, taking great pleasure in watching them squirm under his predatory gaze as he threw riddles at them.

Consequently it was now the more seasoned guards who maintained their block. These men did not quiver so easily, possessing a higher tolerance and thicker skin for Hannibal's lashing insinuations over their indecencies and secrets. On a scale of things, Will would rate that the guards reacted rather well to Hannibal's constant assault on their mental state persevering far longer than any common man. On most days their pride took several low blows, but sometimes Hannibal's disarming tongue and wit crashed through their wall of resistance and the fall out always left his skin marred in purple and green. Yet such physical encounters still served to quench the thirst of Hannibal's boredom, a far more paramount priority it seemed than self-preservation.

Will was beginning to think he just liked the pain.

"Graham." A gruff voice called.

Pulled from his musings, Will angled his head back to look to his 'guest' and frowned. A familiar face lingered outside his cell, hooded eyes watching him, shoulders held rigid as he drew closer to the bars. Will raised an eyebrow, surprised that the man had even offered him the courtesy of using his last name considering he was so fond of the vulgar slur he'd picked out for him.

Hannibal may have a near all-out war with the guards, but that wasn't to say Will didn't have his own problems with them. By proxy of his relationship with Hannibal, the guards had a tendency to treat him one of two ways. Either they respected what they saw as a man broken by his dedication to bringing in the most notorious killer in America or they like to refer to him as 'The Cannibal's little faggot'. Used most commonly by its inventor, the piggish guard preferred to use it as a weapon to rattle Hannibal.

Travis Habowski was the cause of much delight for he and Hannibal, although Hannibal had made it his personal mission to infuriate the man. Knuckles broken twice from the beatings he'd given Hannibal, the space between Habowski's ears was mostly blank, filled only with ego, intolerance and cruelty. Hannibal found him easy game when he was looking to release some physical tension, but at fault of the man's dimness he could not retaliate in any way or form to the doctor's wit.

So instead, he took it out on Will.

To be honest, it was a fair play. They may not be talking but Will was Hannibal's vulnerable point. However Will was no damsel, more than earning the poor treatment from those meaty hands – he was stubborn like that.

"Hurry up you little faggot."

Will could practically hear the grinding of Hannibal's teeth or perhaps it was the mechanical clicking of his brain designing a personalised meal as Habowski's thick tongue clobbered over the harsh sounds.

As distant as they were, Hannibal really did not like it when Will was called that particular *nickname*.

Habowski stood right up against the bars now and the room filled with the sound of heavy breathing, churning Will's stomach as he slowly rose to his feet. He couldn't fathom what the man wanted, but he sensed an odd tendril of danger that had been previously absent from the man despite his aggressive nature. His body tried to coil and make himself appear smaller as Habowski's brows narrowed, eyes gaining a frenzied glimmer of…anticipation? Resisting that urge to shy away Will straightened up, setting his shoulders and a sardonic lilt curled at Habowski's lip – a mockery.

"Will. There are too many guards at the end of the hall."

Hannibal's voice was low, not quite a whisper but it was cautious. Will trusted that he could see more, that he could surmise just what was in play here. That Hannibal was wary enough of it to break the silence between them with the longest voluntary sentence in months made his skin itch.

In the pit of his stomach tension began to build and he gritted his teeth when he looked once more to Habowski, watching as his smirk parted to show gleaming teeth.

"Chilton wants you brought to him Graham."

Will frowned. "Somehow I doubt that."

"Turn around." Habowski snarled.

"Don't."

At Hannibal's warning Will clenched a fist. He had no choice in the matter, if he continued to defy the man he would give him cause to enter the cell and beat him regardless.

The situation was completely out of his control, but surely, as ghastly as Habowski was the facility was monitored. He couldn't whatever he wanted.

Will's gaze wandered to the chains swinging from the guard's thick handed grip and releasing his held breath, walked up to the bars – ignoring Hannibal's growled warning once more. Turning around, he allowed Travis to place the cuffs on him, noting as he withdrew of the mobility he retained in one hand, the cuff clasped uselessly around his wrist.

Before he had the chance to question this, his cell door was buzzed open and Will searched the face looming forward for intention, for motive. What he found was a dramatic dilation of Travis' pupils, a wild flutter to the strained vein at his neck and the knot in his gut twisted as he was pulled from the cell. Dragged closer, the man's proximity had an unusual effect on Will, triggering his body's sensors rather than his mental sensitivity, causing his frame to shudder under the pressure of that vile stare.

Finding himself in front of Hannibal's cell he took in that inscrutable red gaze, his concern betrayed by the tension that drew the skin around his eyes taut. From his peripheral vision he saw Habowski raise his head and signal to the camera just as Hannibal cried out in warning. The baton caught him under the ribs, the impact biting, pressing deep into the soft vulnerability of his organs and he twisted away with a breathless gasp, the loose cuff falling undone.

"Alert! The prisoner is trying to escape!" Travis' voice punctuated the silence before it was filled with a ringing alarm, heavy hands raining down on him with aimless glee.

Bracing his arms about his head he felt the tremble of footsteps rush towards him, their silent spectators running to Habowski's aid and he shouted as pain blossomed from his kidney. The edge of knuckles, sharp boots and the flat of the baton bit into him, throwing him to the ground. Over the grunts of men and the cracking of bones he could hear the sound of screaming that was not his own. The ringing was coming from Will's own mind by now, and yet he could still hear the unleashed rage projected in Hannibal's bellows, in the rattling and pounding of hands against his plastic domain.

At once the assault stopped and the alarm quietened but Hannibal was a raving beast snarling as he held daggers for Travis. Curling up small Will tried to draw shallow breaths through his aching lungs, watching as Habowski approached Hannibal's cell. Slamming his hands against the perspex glass once more, blood trickling down his fingers, Hannibal growled and spat promises of hideous cruelties to the man, to all of them. Yet Travis only laughed, fearing little of the caged monster. Wheezing, Will tried to clear the film from his eyes, coughing as the numbness began to subside, his body lighting up with pain.

Hannibal's gaze flashed to him in concern before he snarled, incisors gleaming in warning to Travis, hair frazzled and skewed as he prowled on the other side of the cell.

"Learn your place psycho," Habowski leered. "Else your little faggot will get another beating."

Mastering himself, Hannibal at once seemed to calm down, head tilting almost indiscernibly. His quick eyes never once left the guard and Will saw everything playing

within the smile that began to shape his lips. The plan formulating, the precision of how exactly he would draw it out, how he would be crueller than he ever had – how he would make Travis Habowski suffer dearly. That was his promise.

"Don't smile at me you freaky fuck!" Travis growled, fists clenching as power began to slip from his fingers.

"Hate it when we're not predictable don't you?" Hannibal taunted and Travis smacked the glass, turning back to fix Will with a maddened glare.

As he began stalking towards him once more, Hannibal's face darkened, lip twitching in the form of a snarl before another guard stepped in his way, halting the brute's approach. "Travis man, the cameras are back on, you'll get fucked by Chilton if you do anything more."

Even from his low vantage point, Will could tell the guard was younger than most of his assailants, yet he kept his face turned up, gaze glued to Hannibal. Eyes flickering to where Hannibal watched the exchange attentively Will saw that the gaze was shared not with distain but familiarity?

Had it been a flicker of the light or had Hannibal's expression softened to something akin to appreciation?

Travis huffed, fingers flexing. "Just you wait Lecter." He spat and they locked gazes, Hannibal the perfect vision of blankness before Habowski growled and stormed off down the hall.

"Oh I can wait."

With their leader gone and Hannibal watching them with an ominous smile, the remaining guards propped him up carefully and shifted nervously as one ran to retrieve the medical staff. Pressing his body to the cold wall, he moaned in pain trying to ease the burning inflammation that was spreading through his battered flesh.

"Will?" Came a surprisingly gentle and sensitive sound.

"…"

"Will I- you must stay awake."

Opening a heavy eye he saw Hannibal crouched low, scanning his body to assess the damage, no doubt to direct (*order*) the medical staff about. But there was a deep anxiety in the way his fingers flexed, speaking of a longing, a gesture that Will knew all too well from their past. An…incorrigible need to touch him, to assure he was real, and his. Present long before they became lovers, and long before Hannibal had had him imprisoned, it was an ache they shared. But it wasn't a thing of lust, rather a need for tangible proof that they were still there, with each other, in a way that no other had been before them.

Will wanted to be mad at him, to spit with fury at the man for holding him at arm's length for so long, for allowing the lonely madness of his mind to churn doubt, making him

hate him, crave him – making him miss him. But he was just so glad to finally hear his voice seeking him out, breathing his name with weight and acknowledgement.

"Hannibal, I—" He spluttered, chest seizing as he struggled to breathe, words caught by the swelling constriction around his lungs.

"I know." Hannibal murmured softly, but did he really?

Did he know that for all Will loved him, he was not sorry for the actions he had taken to get them here? He may love him, but Will truly believed there was no better place on earth for them and their sickness. He was a man held three oceans apart from himself. He was the man he had grown up to be, a man who existed on the outskirts of human social standards, clinging to morality and yet this man somehow now existed in harmony with the killer, ever affected by its presence within him, even when it lay dormant and unobstructing. His creature was not possessed by the clear desire and compelling need to kill as perhaps was the case with Hannibal, but he found elated power in the horrible and beautiful realisation that murder was possible, that in a moment he could take a person's life and believe they were worthy of such a death, free of guilt.

To be two such men at once terrified him.

"Will, you really must try to stay awake, *please."* Hannibal's voice was so thick with distress, Will couldn't help but smile, feeling the warmth of affection for the man fill him. "The medical guards will be here soon, just try to stay awake – Will listen to my voice."

He hummed behind a pained smile, feeling woozy as the structures around him began to bend and bow. "I missed you…"

"Will!"

*

"Your absence left me detached, with every single detail about me attached to you that even sometimes my tea smells like your coffee, and I can't determine whether it's losing its scent or I am losing my sanity."

— *VàZaki Nada*

*

Daijuunanashō

Chapter Notes

Hey I'm back and super sorry for such a long hiatus! I was once again travelling around Japan for a month - but I'm back now so things should be back on schedule. This chapter we get to have a look at Will's screwy side, all that self-reflection and realisation has made him accept some of the hard truths about himself, particularly his own possessiveness!

Anyway again I'm super sorry for the long wait, I tried to get this out as quick as possible so I hope its worth it!!
Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

"He has this odd way of gently hurting me, and when I think about it, it feels like he had gently put out a cigarette on my heart." Bshayer F.R.

*

Hospital whites blinded him.

The sterile scent of chemicals coating the odour of sickness, vomit and defecation filled his nose. Soft saccharine voices walked his barely conscious mind through his injuries as though he were just a normal patient and not a criminal with cuffs about his wrists. Kept bound and woozy, hours passed as he was prodded with needles and grabbed by hands that were not too kind, his wounds wrapped and bones set.

Confined to the bed his waking moments were spent listening to the pitiful moans of the other patients and denying his empathy the magnetic pull to feel their screams and whimpers as they shook and rolled about in their own fluids. After some nights had passed, the drugs were reduced enough to restore his voice to him and he demanded to be returned to his cell, away from the bright lights. With the bay always in demand for fresh beds, they let him go without complaint.

However, on reflection it wasn't the wisest decision. He was just as bound there, unable to walk on his own, confined to his bed, body riddled with aches and creaks that left him racked with pain, disrupting his already restless sleep. Time seemed to drag on at a snail's pace as he hobbled from bed to toilet and back again. Stubbornly denying help, days passed in this feeble state but he refused to return to the medical bay, far preferring his musty cell where the only smell of sickness was his own, fresh and ripe.

In total Will had sustained three broken ribs and a skull fracture, his skinlittered in mottled spots of purple and yellow, yet the cause of most of his discomfort came from a dislocated knee and a particularly tenderised kidney.With time passing hazily, his mind and body began to suffer severely under the mixture of exhaustion and strong, mind numbing painkillers. Though Hannibal had taken to holding his tongue on Will's choice to remove himself from the grip of the medic staff, he drew a line when Will stopped eating.

Functioning on only a few hours of sleep for days, Will was unable to keep his meals down, the thought of any substance roiling his gut, too heavy, too nauseating.

"Whilst I admire your will to self-medicate away from the bay of lab rats, your loss of appetite is a worrying development Will," Hannibal's voice was thick with concern. "It's been two days."

Shit, Will had thought it had only been one.

"There may be a multitude of reasons you're not healing, at this point it would be wise to return to—

"No Hannibal." He protested, albeit weakly, body cocooned amongst the sheets, torso clenched down on the wave of nausea sweeping through him.

"You may not want to Will, but you *need* too, this may be serious and I can't—." Hannibal stopped, his agitation tangible in the tired sigh that slipped through gritted teeth.

Will's lips quirked into a grim smile and he laid a hand against the wall, hoping beyond the fathom of reality to reach out and feel just a pulse of the man that lay past it. How frustrating it must be for a man who possessed the skills to soothe and help him and yet could neither see nor touch him. All he could do was wait and listen. Though their silence had ended, in this moment they truly felt the weight of their chains, the wall between them feeling wider with each word, the cold brick a reminder of the absence of each other's warmth.

"Talk to me." Will closed his eyes, picturing an extravagant table set, meals perfectly designed and coordinated by Hannibal, his pride beaming from the depths of his person suit. A well of nostalgia stirred as he recalled the delight in Hannibal's voice as he entertained every meal with intrigue and spectacle, delighted as his guest took part in his heinous secret. It had always been a performance for his own ego - nonetheless, Will had fed from it too. "Make me hungry…take me to dinner."

Hannibal gave a wistful sigh against the wall, the sound muffled but near and Will liked to imagine he was just a breath away, *touchable*. "Vilnius*,* there I found a place so small, so displaced from the busy commotion of the world, just a private pocket of silence. It offered

me the means to pluck myself free of the threads pulling tight at my mind, though perhaps it simply rekindled a disconnected kinship with its…familial warmth. A pleasant moment of cathartic relief."

"Ah, a taste of old Europe." Will's stomach rumbled as phantom scents teased his senses, the nausea subsiding the further Hannibal spoke.

"It took me years to return to Lithuania and when I did many things were stirred within me." There was a pause, a caught vowel as though he swirled the words about his mouth to first test them, like the first taste of wine. "It was bracing to return to a place that had left such an indelible mark on me.It is not healing to see your childhood home, but it helps you measure whether you are broken, and how and why, assuming you want to know."

Hannibal spoke for Will's pleasure, tone low and melodic, but he did not linger on his past, returning to describe lush food and decadent aromas. The glimpse at his damage had been a conscious revelation, but one said only for Will's benefit. A bared moment of vulnerability the man had experienced to match the weakness Will currently felt, constricted in his broken body. Penance was not something Hannibal was in the habit of offering and in this case it was unnecessary – sweet - but unnecessary. This was enough, these vivid images of a mellow little place full of lush aromas, room bathed in colours from stained glass windows, a secular kindness in service and an offer of privacy in gently lit corners.

He would have liked to have seen a young Hannibal there, tucked away within a booth, smiling as he relished his meal.

Amongst the imaginings of rich, decadent dishes, Will finally drifted off to sleep only to awake later to the sound of whispers. Blinking, he pressed the heel of his palms to his eyes, wiping away the lingering sleep from his lashes. Though his eyelids were heavy in the desperation to return to sleep, the ache in his gut had subsided and for the first time since the attack he felt more like himself. Despite how convincing the warmth of his burrow was, he was lured into consciousness by the timbre of Hannibal's voice.

That voice was a weapon, wielded to destroy and seduce.

Hannibal was unmatched in his ability to eliminate a person's sense of power. He enjoyed playing with man's fear of themselves, dragging every doubt and private agony from the shadows, playing openly with them, shedding light on every disgusting angle. Tongue quick, he spoke with such clinical discipline his words seemed only to be objective assessment, free of personal vengeance, but nevertheless cruel as he confirmed every twisted doubt until a person felt no self-worth. Hannibal's voice was one of his finest instruments, but it had been so long since Will had heard it used in such an alluring manner, vowels purred and suggestive.

"You needn't wait much longer." Hannibal's voice rumbled and a needy voice gave a reply, lust thickening the way it whined incoherently.

Will's chest constricted, breath shaking. Like a rock lying across his diaphragm, the weight was slowly crushing him, and yet it felt as though something sharp seemed to push at the unyielding flesh covering his ribs, trying to pierce through. Will's hand twitched, jealousy

shivering it way up his spine to coil at the base of his neck and his teeth ground down on the desire to render flesh from bones. He knew nothing of why the two men spoke and yet that Hannibal had offered the sweet seduction of his voice was warrant enough for Will too long to murder.

Even under such persuasion he could see his own madness as much as feel it. When had he become the one so hungry to possess?

Voices low and soft their dark words filled the empty hall with whispers of a conspiracy. The acknowledgement that there were further secrets, something new that was unshared between Hannibal and he clawed at Will's insides. An absence in their relationship still remained, an aching space that pulsed pink and raw, sometimes damaged. There were still things left unsaid, unresolved…unforgiven.

Struggling to make out the words past melodic drawls and honeyed vowels he heard his name and listened closer.

"—no my dear boy, I have plans for Will." Hannibal murmured sweetly.

"but w—not deserving, d—have me." The voice grew petulant as it mumbled inaudibly.

Hannibal tutted, voice clear and unabashed. "Leave me to my choices; I will not act until the timing is perfect. Now, now don't look so sad my sweet." He crooned, tenderness grating on Will nerves.

"*Good boy,*" Hannibal's voice swayed, dripping with praise. "Now first, Habowski. You know what to do?"

"Of course Daddy."

Hearing footsteps retreat, Will laid back down, burying his head into the pillow despite the desire to stare down the filth fawning over what was his. Regardless of whether Hannibal was just exploiting the man's daddy issues for his own pursuits, that he offered part of himself Will considered his own set his blood to boil. His delusions of love had come far from the anxious denial he endured in the days of Alana's affair with Hannibal, its flavour had changed with the acceptance of the fact that he did indeed love this man.

However by now he felt he had made it clear, to Hannibal, to the world, that this man was his.

He had nearly died for him. He had chosen imprisonment to *be* with him. How *dare* this needy little slut woo him? How dare Hannibal encourage him with a voice, mind and body that belonged to Will!

The man had disappeared down the hall but Will was breathing hard, hand clenched into sheets as sweat poured from his body. He would drive himself mad thinking like that. But it would all Hannibal's fault. If the man ever touched Hannibal, Will would kill him, and Hannibal would watch.

His stomach gurgled.

He was suddenly starving.

***

In the throngs of sleep Will heard a soft noise, the sweeping sound of feet brushing over the ground somewhere nearby. Stirring him from the depths of slumber he lingered just beyond consciousness as the gentle press of a hand grazed across his forehead. A ghost of warm air spilt over his cheek as that hand swept his hanging curls back and away from his eyes, fingers looping around each lock.

A dream?

Cold walls and iron bars kept any tender touch from him – god how long had it been? There were few people in his life to have touched him with such gentle affection, fewer still who were still alive. Perhaps that was why the hand felt so broad, the long fingers caressing his scalp so intimately familiar. But Hannibal could not pass through solid brick.

Besides, he was still annoyed at him for his 'midnight dalliance' last week.

Yet it was such a nice dream. To once more feel the warm touch of a lover's caress – it reminded him that he had not yet forgotten the details of Hannibal's embrace; how he hoped he never would for all the years they would come to spend here. Leaning his head into the cupped palm, he let the gentle caress and rhythmic exhale of breath by his ear - that sound of life that could not *possibly* be there - lull him back into the grip of sleep.

By morning it was clear what had happened.

Once again, Hannibal had acted under the fall of night, slipping past Chilton's 'infallible' system to murder, this time directly, with violence and retribution.

Will snapped up, alert in bed when he was suddenly woken by a shrill sound. Amongst all his shrieks, Will had never heard Chilton's voice rise quite so high and to such volume. It would have been impressive had it not cracked under the sheer pressure of frustration and histrionic disbelief. Body far more capable of movement now, Will hobbled to the bars to look passed Chilton's widely gesturing hands as he shouted at Hannibal to the red figure at the end of the hall.

Strung up against the bars, arms spread wide and high, Travis Habowski made a beautifully mangled corpse. Almost crucificial, he looked somewhat like an eagle, albeit one with its chest cavity carved open, its insides left to dangle and drip from his body. Extravagant yet messy – Hannibal was sure in the mood to get the deed done.

Now the facility was in a state of panic, unable to determine exactly how Hannibal Lecter had managed to slip from his cell and kill the man effortlessly before returning himself

to his plastic cage. In the meantime Hannibal was doing nothing to hide the evidence that he had committed the murder. Under the terse instructions of Chilton, Hannibal was drawn from his cell and Will took in the villainous sight of him. Clothes drenched in the dark red stains, splatters reaching up high to paint his face, his hands were coated up to his elbows as though he had spent a time entertaining himself with Habowski's insides.

Dragged passed him, Hannibal smiled, head tilted curiously as he considered Will before his gaze focused upon his forehead. Eyebrow rising, his mouth split into a grin as he was pulled away to be processed. With a frown Will ran a hand over his forehead, whipping back around with wide eyes to shadow himself in the darkness of his cell as his fingernails grazed over a tacky residue. Stuck around his stray curls were crusty flakes of dry blood, Habowski's blood.

That bastard.

With a lurch that shot pain up his leg he stumbled to the sink, hand furiously wiping away the evidence of Hannibal's crime. Panting heavily, he sat down at the end of his cot pressing his damp forehead into his sleeve. A distance away Travis' body was lowered down from the gate, the sound of the camera's shutter echoing just slight above the slick sounds of flesh squelching.

"Will you inform the police?" A voice murmured close by and Chilton gave an exasperated huff.

"That is protocol; however Hannibal's conviction already involves numerous life sentences. For allowing this to happen I could very well lose my job. The matter will be dealt with…delicately. As for his punishment – it will be mine to give." The two men moved into view and Will's brows narrowed as Chilton's companion cut a familiar figure.

"What I want to know is how he managed this? He had to have had help, someone on the inside." Chilton cursed, hair falling out of place.

"Perhaps Lecter goaded Habowski to let him out. Travis did have a bone to pick with him." Will didn't know the young man's name, but he knew without a doubt that this was the very man who whispered lusty words to *his* doctor.

"And the idiot decided to let him out and settle it?" Chilton queried incredulously, though tension slip from his shoulders. It seemed he found the theory somewhat comforting.

"Well he's disabled the cameras before when—" They had begun to pass by his cell when the young man came to a halt, eyes assessing Will neutrally.

Chilton followed his gaze to turn to Will. "Yes, the incident with Mr Graham. How are you feeling?" With Frederick's full attention on him now, Will watched the young guard's expression change.

It became apparent that the pause in the guard's step had not been the inference Chilton had taken it for, rather a halt of discord that came when one viewed something loathed. The tension over his face screamed of impatience and frustration and Will was pleased that the

man at least found his existence just as infuriating. Who would have thought he would feel inclined to fight like cats and dogs over the man he loved – what were they sixteen? But in reality they were not such small animals. No, they were predators, beasts.

Will's smile was broad, drenched in saccharine as he aimed it towards the man. "I'm healing." He watched as the look of unaltered hatred took shape over the guard's face.

Chilton nodded, clapping the young man on the shoulder as he moved away. "I'll leave it to you to inform Habowski's family Landom, you know my signature."

The guard remained still and Chilton looked back at him with a frown as he continued to stare Will down, violence itching under the surface of his now blank expression. Will smirked even as a fist curled his anger into a ball against his thigh. This man would do well to realise Will's presence was not as delicate and tenuous in Hannibal's life as he perhaps wished.

"Caspar?"

Caspar seemed to unfreeze. "Of course sir." Icy grey eyes threw one last glance into the cell before he followed Chilton out.

There was no doubt in his mind that this man was more than just Hannibal's accomplice in the murder of Habowski, knowing Hannibal, he was likely his conspirator in an escape plan. Because of course Hannibal was trying to escape - he may be prepared to wait as long as necessary - but he would get out. Oddly enough that thought didn't bother Will anymore?

But this Caspar Landom. He was a man of two opposing sides, possibly on the kind of spectrum that warranted him his own cell here. He wouldn't be the first patient. That Chilton could get so unlucky twice and have two murderers working under his roof - within his circle? Poor bastard. He really needed to screen who he let into this place more thoroughly.

If you spend enough time in a mental hospital, you pick up the drill. They may never suspect you were ever in.

Caspar was likely a schizophrenic affected by some kind of identity fluctuation, that or he simply masked part of himself in regular company. The face he presented to Chilton was quite capable of interacting normally, competent and high functioning, the other however, appeared dependent, driven to feed off the attention given by those he idolised. Not to mention his lusty complex over father figures. One he had now fixated on Hannibal.

It seemed that despite how he could command himself with confidence, the creature within him possessed an impious voice, small and desperate to appease.

Easy for Hannibal to feed off.

And yet despite the likelihood that Caspar was simply a tool in the plan of escape and survival, Will was furious. He gnashed his teeth even as his heart beat dropped to a dreadful slow tremor, violent thoughts seeping their way across his mind for contemplation. He had the urge to make Caspar suffer.

He was a little disgusted by himself that it was this man that stirred more of an emotional reaction from him than the body splattered down the hall. He should have been unnerved by what happened to Habowski, and yet he was instead entirely apathetic towards Hannibal's murderous actions. Instead he was consumed by a cold and oddly calm jealousy. Were these the insecurities of love? Had their relationship become so typical?

Will buried his head in his hands.

Of course not - he really needed to give himself more credit - after all, how could this be even close to the normal emotional fits of love when he was in love with a serial killer. One that enjoyed using his being to get what he wanted. Will didn't fear Hannibal's reciprocation of Landom's affection, but he knew his doctor would offer the man just enough to acquire his help, and that was far too much in Will's eyes. Did he just assume that Will would be alright with it – that he would just allow it to happen?

God how he wanted to kill Caspar – he felt a cool liquid pool in his stomach, spreading through his body in preparation – in anticipation. But he couldn't do anything now, but when he could…

He rubbed the back of his neck, head tilting to look to the ceiling and slowly he became aware of a creeping chuckle coming from his own mouth. Madness, pure madness – look at what he had become. Was this what Hannibal had seen within him, was this what he had wanted him to embrace? He deserved him now, they deserved each other and they deserved this place. The man Will had become for him would not slink back into the shadows, not now that it knew the taste of blood, the feel of life squirming till it broke under the pressure of his touch. Not now that he knew the deep heat of Hannibal, the capacity of his heart, the taste of him. Hannibal deserved him and his vicious possession too.

If Caspar so much as touched him, Will would kill him.

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When Hannibal was finally returned from solitary Will was mobile once more, the bruised and lingering ache in his body only a minor hindrance. With his recovery came Hannibal's decline. Pulled between two sturdy looking guards, Hannibal seemed to sway and stumble with each step, possessing the skewed balance of a drunkard. Brows knitting together Will searched through the bars and as he took in that glazed expression, his stomach lurched.

"Hannibal," he called out, voice barely above a whisper, terrified to confirm his suspicions.

A small mirthless smile drew low on Hannibal's hanging head as he hummed in reply, tongue peeking out to wet parched lips. "Just drugs Will. I'm here."

The pressure building behind his eyes retreated as relief allowed him to draw breath, air flooding his lungs. Sagging against the bars, he laid a hand to his chest and felt the rapid beat of his heart. Chilton had promised Will, swearing that he wouldn't actually use electro therapy on Hannibal, that he was patient far too valuable, but that was before he waltzed out of his cell and murdered someone. Not to mention it was likely an assurance given only to guarantee Will's cooperation - after all he did give Frederick hell last time.

"What are you on?" He asked as he heard the guards shut the block gate behind them.

"New protocol now." Hannibal sucked in an uneven breath. "Single and dual guard *escorts* will now take the measure to place me under 'medical restraints' —*thoroughly*."

Will winced. Hannibal's administration of many self-hypnosis and sedation drugs had led Chilton to get a hold of a discontinued and dangerous alternative - Methaqualone. After such an effective first dose, Hannibal had done his best to hide the side effects and Chilton had thoughtfully put it aside for emergencies. If he had heard the thrashing and whimpers of a child in the night as Will had, he no doubt would have taken pleasure in punishing Hannibal with it more frequently.

"Will you be alright?" He worried his lip, cautious of Chilton's listening devices yet desperate. Hannibal had looked so fragile. It would be impossible for Hannibal's system to handle continuous doses, had he been on them this entire time in solitary? What was Chilton thinking?

Hannibal sighed. "He took measure to allow me the time to adjust with smaller doses, but he is ambitious in his desire to keep me on a leash."

"How does it feel?"

"Like fog over water." There was a pause "I'm functional enough; the rest…remains to be seen, for now I feel almost, euphoric."

Will sat down on the bed, drawing his knees to his chest to clutch something alive and solid in that grip that long to reach for Hannibal. "This won't be the end of it."

"Perhaps," He sounded apathetic, bed creaking as he shifted. "I'm afraid it will be drugs, straitjackets and hand-trucks from now on. However Chilton has assured me that hand trucks are reserved for the sycophantic he likes to impress. Not to mention the philanthropists that want to take a look at me before he can squeeze out more funding from them. A lucrative trade mental facilities."

Resting his chin on top of his knees, Will's face twisted in displeasure, glad Hannibal could not see him. Chilton's retaliation for Habowski felt incomplete somehow, the punishment far too light and it made him nervous. Hannibal may have murdered for his own ego - for that was all revenge was really - but Will was not so offended by Hannibal's selfishness to not see the act as somewhat romantic.

This was lengths they would go for each other now, though perhaps Will was worse. Hannibal acted upon the initiative to protect and restore claim, still bearing the scars of his

lost sister, but Will… he acted on the simple display of intent. Perhaps it was because he lacked the premeditated calculation and thirst for murder that Hannibal thrived on, but his own initiative was possessive and just as greedy, driven to eliminate any and every risk. Too many things in life had already tried to separate he and Hannibal. He would never risk even the slightest chance again.

He had taken the measures to secure it with Chilton but in light of Hannibal's acts he felt the threads of that promise were but a tug away from unravelling.

Hannibal huffed at his silence. "Chilton won't see me dead Will."

Will was not so assured this was over.

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"The devil got into your head Will, that kind of evil is insidious, you are poisoned by it." Chilton tapped his pen against his clip board where he sat on the other side of the bars, legs crossed and expression openly strained. "I can help you be free of it but you have to be willing to talk to me outside the confines of your cell. In the hall perhaps, somewhere that Lecter can't interfere?"

There was a snort from next door and Will smiled at the tension it drew around Frederick's jaw. The director took a deep breath and levelled Will with an honest look. "You have to reject the devil Will."

"Finding god has made you so droll Frederick." Hannibal sneered from his cell.

"I can have the interns administer some more Methaqualone. How are your nightmares treating you?" Chilton bit back and Hannibal growled.

Will shook his head, almost flattered by Chilton's persistence to try to save him. "The devil is not a horned red man. He is a fallen angel, a creature that was once God's favourite." Will sighed and rested his head again the brick wall, absentmindedly wandering whether he was now closer to Hannibal. "He can be beautiful Dr Chilton, lovable even in his cruelty." He breathed in wonder and saw Chilton frown.

"*Mmm*, I want to fuck you." Hannibal murmured, voice gentle and loving, the curse slipping so naturally off his tongue and Chilton flushed a deep crimson.

Coughing he stammered. "I don't believe you're beyond help Will. You can be saved – god would forgive you, he is merciful."

Hannibal gave a full bellied laugh that trailed into an incredulous chuckle as he spoke. "God would do no such thing Chilton. He is far too capricious for such things, don't delude yourself. This is the same 'deity' that created a world with insects who's entire life cycle is

centred around burrowing into the eyes of children to eat their way out, rendering the children blind."

Chilton visibly recoiled and gritted his teeth, attention now entirely on Hannibal and Will wondered whether amongst Hannibal's derisive speculation over deities whether he wanted a God to exist?

"No—" Hannibal continued. "God is selfish and unjust and he wants you to thank him for it, to get down on your knees in pray and dedicate your very existence to appeasing him. If God was as good and benevolent as you say, why would he allow a creature such as I to exist?"

The pen in Chilton's hand broke, spring flying across the room and Will looked to where his fingers clenched around the split plastic.

"If god is real Frederick, he is naught but a maniac and a child who is more than happy to watch the world flourish and burn. With that knowledge – can you really continue to respect such a monstrous God?" Hannibal held his silence after that, no doubt relishing the resonation of his torturous statement as it slowly turned Chilton's expression to one of anguish and then to rage.

In the end he fled, the conversation ending much like the many that had preceded it. Even after every encounter they had had, Chilton still refused to accept that he knew nothing of Hannibal, only encouraging the killer to rise at chance to belittle him. Hannibal would never grow tired of challenging Chilton's ethics and beliefs, delighted to do so in the most cruelly inventive ways to prove quite how fragile and feeble Chilton's power was.

Still, Will feared how long the leash around Hannibal could be stretched before Chilton took the measures to silence him. There was further punishment awaiting Hannibal for Habowski, and Will feared it. Though he loved Hannibal and his brazen snark, he wished he too would fear it. That he would fear what Chilton could take from him, even just a little, just to save himself.

Even if only for Will's sake.

***

"You've only got yourself too blamed." Will mused over lunch. He could hear Hannibal grumbling over his food, snorting in disgust at the poor quality of meat and soggy vegetables. Despite being a child, Hannibal was a survivalist, not a princess, taking prison life in stride. He'd eat it, but damned if he wouldn't complain about it first.

"Its fodder, absolutely atrocious." He grumbled.

"I'm not taking about the food Hannibal."

Hannibal hummed. “Habowski was a warranted and savoured treat.” He huffed, plate clattering against the table, likely untouched until he was hungry enough to work up an appetite for it. “I’m surprised you slept through it all.”

Will glared at the wall. “That may have had something to do with his removed vocal chords.”

There was pleased sound, lukewarm, like an evening stretch. “The sound of death is not always a sonata. The removal of the tongue and vocal chords is an effective method to acquiring silence while I indulge. It allows one the chance to enjoy the far finer details of death, like the body’s contortions, jerking like a puppet on strings or the rapid flutter of expressive eyes, that last moment of acceptance. Those are indelible moments worth savouring just as much as any slither of meat.”

A shudder ran under Will’s skin, as though the trembling vibrations of Hannibal’s quiet orchestra of slippery flesh and cracking bones rung in his ears. He saw for a moment the splash of red across the wall, the steady rhythmic drip of blood trickling down the jail bars, the beat of foot spasms rattling against the cold metal as Hannibal searched, rummaging deeper into the gaping cavern of Habowski’s chest.

Such a mess he had left Chilton, straying from his elegant clean design to leave behind a macabre spread, like a hellish winged creature.

Will’s chin lifted with a contemplative tilt. “You spoiled the meat.”

“I dined fresh first.” Came an almost reptilian hiss. “I’ll save some for you next time.”

He rolled his eyes, lacking the fortitude and energy to object to such an offer. However a thought crossed his mind, one he had never really taken the time to entertain, let only ask. “Did you ever consider what I might taste like?”

There was silence before Hannibal spoke in whisper. “Yes…”

“Did you fantasise about killing me?”

“Many times.”

“Do you still?”

“Mmm.”

“What was it like?”

Hannibal took a shaky breath, holding it long, and Will found himself doing the same.

“Incandescent.”

Will shuddered, all those questions he had kept down, all the answers he had simply assumed were raising their fists to the edges of his mind, begging to be asked. It was so rare for Hannibal to be forth coming, too fond of riddles and obscure meanings. He thought about

measuring his questions, fearful he may lose this chance of honesty but as soon as he opened his mouth *that* question spilled out.

"Why didn't you kill me that first night?"

"Why do you say I didn't try?" The reply was wary.

It was unlike Hannibal to stick to a fact they both knew was false. His brows creased before he shrugged, reflex forgetting that Hannibal could not see him. "There were far more effective ways to ensure my death."

Hannibal sighed. "I wish for you to suffer as I did, like the heat and security held within me was slowly being drawn out and filled with a cold absence. It was an absence I always knew was there, but it was quiet…bearable before you." There was a thud, like the sound of flesh meeting the brick wall and Will wondered whether it was Hannibal's head or hand.

He looked to the ceiling, as a moment passed in silence. Hannibal had carried that feeling in those final days like a ball and chain. It was not unlike the feeling Will had during his singular imprisonment, so whilst he felt sad for the pain he had caused, there should have been no place for guilt over his actions. Jack had told him time and time again, and yet, there it was.

"But then I forgave you and it didn't matter whether you lived or died so much as whether you could comprehend what you had done to me." Hannibal ground his teeth. "It wasn't until afterwards that I realised that you were *still* doing it to me."

Will lowered his head. "And that's why you returned."

"And that's why I returned." Utensils clattered about as Hannibal finally brought himself to eat. There was more to say, a reply to give, but the words were stuck deep in Will's throat, guilty words turned rusty and gritty in the restraints suffered in their unspoken isolation within him. By the time Hannibal had finished his meal, Will was sure the moment had passed, his opportunity to grasp hold of the thoughts his beloved had on that fate night sinking into the bleak silence of their damp stone walls.

Yet Hannibal spoke once more after a contemplative sigh. "In forgiveness and love I took leave of my senses and lost the chance to be rid of you. Knowing you were somewhere, breathing apart from me was—." He drew in a sharp, strained breath. "You could go far away from me and that was…unacceptable."

"Better I be six feet in the ground?"

There was no reply, but footsteps could be heard echoing down the hall and Will was overcome by the desperate feeling of fleeting time, like sand slipping through his fingertips.

"At least then you would know where I was, right?" He heard the jangle of chains now, clinking together in time with the tap of a cane. "A comfort we both longed for, a place where we each were untouchable for the rest of the world."

“Ah yes, for here I am now with you – but you could not make me untouchable even here.”

Will grew unreasonably angry in a sudden wave of heat, feeling the bitterness that came with the rejection of the truth. “You still have your life, your mind.”

Hannibal’s sigh was warm. “Yes, yes you tried. Unfortunately here comes Chilton now to whisk me away and make do on his threat.”

“Wait, what?” Will flew to the bars as Chilton ordered the guards to restrain Hannibal. “Chilton!”

“Come quietly now Lecter.” Chilton watched on as three men pulled Hannibal from his cell.

Forced into a straitjacket, Hannibal’s eyes never left Will, gaze insistent and open. “This is not your fault Will.”

Will looked to Chilton, stricken, suddenly acutely aware of what was happening before him. “Frederick! You told me you wouldn’t—.”

Chilton flexed his grip around the gold hilt of his cane, sighing as one did to a disappointing child whose hand remained wedged in the cookie jar. “Mr Graham. We are not friends, perhaps we could have been, but you are my patient. The leniency I showed you is because I think you are a man shaped by a love for a monster and a complicated drive for justice. You sacrificed a lot to ensure this monster was apprehended.” He rotated the signet ring on his finger. “You’ve done your job, let me do mine.”

“But electro-therapy will do nothing to cure—.”

“Yes, but perhaps it will make him nicer?” Chilton’s mouth curved into a cruel smile.

Hannibal sneered in disgust. “Such pathetic grasps you make to recover the courage and stature I stripped from you. Fumbling, bumbling little boy.”

Chilton leaned forward, waving a finger in his face. “I relish the chance to cause you pain Lecter.”

“Careful now, that would make you a psychopath.” With a flashing grin, Hannibal’s sharp teeth were bared in full view and Chilton took an unease step back.

“Chilton that’s torture!” Will exclaimed, rattling the bars.

Chilton waved him off. “Will, I indulged your behaviour because I know you well enough to believe you are not entirely credible for your actions—.”

“—and you’d be wrong” Hannibal smirked.

“—*but*,” Chilton stressed. “MrLecter murdered a guard and as he does not adequately respond to any medication he needs to be…*placated*. Now put the mask on him.” Frederick

stalked off despite Will's heightened plea. He didn't care how shrill his voice grew, how desperate and undignified he sounded; he didn't care about any of those things if only he could save Hannibal from this fate.

But his calls fell on flat ears.

Refusing to be dragged along, Hannibal shook off his guards attempts and straightened up, casting one last glance at Will. "This is not your fault."

I love you.

He didn't say it but Will heard it nonetheless. He felt it pressed against his cheek in a whisper that still echoed from that night he had lain prone in bed, deep eyes watching over him, a gentle hand in his curls.

Come back to me. That was what he meant to say, but Hannibal needed more, he needed a challenge and it was that, and only that that may save him from what awaited him. Yet even with that, how did one win against electricity?

"Don't you dare leave me!" Is what he said instead, those angered and desperate vowels echoing long after Hannibal was gone from sight, sealed behind a concrete wall.

Will curled down on his bed, arms wrapped around his torso. "Please don't leave me."

Love had marked and marred him with sharp teeth, leaving him littered with wounds that would not heal.

*

Chapter End Notes

So this is actually where I came across my indecision for how I wanted to end the story - but I'm going to go with the ending I've promised many of you, but I'll put the alternative up once this is finished which will be soon! I hope you enjoyed reading lovelies, we've made it so far! I never believed this story would go as far as it did and its all because of you guys so thank you so much for all your support and lovely words of encouragement! I seriously couldn't have done it without you!
Elliearna

Daijuuhachishō

Chapter Notes

Phew, not sure why this one took so long to get out, but to be fair it is my longest! These past months have been so jammed packed and now with the news of cancellation :(But we shall not lose hope, our community is strong and fierce, we will ensure Hannibal continues!

Anywho, the chapter is a return to Hannibal now look forward to how he's coping with 'therapy' plus the dramatic (I'm lying) prison escape and a smutty end!

For those still reading who are not a fan of Bottom!Hannibal this a warning for you, this chapters got it, but it occurs at the end.

Happy reading lovelies!
Elliearna

See the end of the chapter for more notes

*

“A kiss is the beginning of cannibalism.”

*

Bile surged up from his stomach, burning the back of his throat as it filled his mouth. He coughed and spluttered it into the toilet, yet that foul taste, acidic and bitter remained, encouraging a fresh wave of nausea. Keeling forward into the bowl he gasped, his hands clenching tightly around the white porcelain rim as he tried to hold the sickness at bay long enough to just *breath.* His nose ran, thick with mucus and he could honestly say he hadn’t felt this undignified in a long time.

He was going to kill Frederick Chilton.

Not yet, no - but in time.

In the past Chilton narrowly missed being paired with a bitter chardonnay for his usefulness as decoy, but he should have stayed dead, far from Hannibal’s eyes.

Of late he dreamt of the delightful torture he would inflict on Chilton - a pleasant thought indeed, nonetheless he preferred a blissfully empty sleep. For years Hannibal had slept peacefully, free of nightmares and dreams alike yet Will had somehow flicked the switch that had held it all at bay. In an empty sleep there was no chance of noxious memories crawling their way through the holes in his mind. Now, every night brought with it the fickle

gamble of finding a sweet haven or a place of danger behind his closed eyes. All the sweet visions of the life he and Will could have shared with Abigail were not enough to risk falling into the grasp of the shadows lurking beneath. The silence was better, a safe place where he could hide. Where he could not hear the trembling cries begging for his help, or see that small chubby hand outstretched in fear, searching for his own - that frail, dirty and shackled thing.

He heaved once more, arms shaking as his eyes watered with every gagging lurch of his stomach. His head pounded as an ache set into his skull, his face contorted in disgust and agony, fire burning up his oesophagus. He hurt all over. The skin about his temples was raised; pink in colour, as though rubbed raw by friction rather than the searing heat of the conductors. His hair stood sharply up from his scalp where it had been crudely shorn, his fringe frazzled and now growing limp with sweat after each wracking expulsion.

Feeling the last wave subside, the gurgling discomfort of his stomach settled and he slipped limply from the bowl to cling to the scratchy fabric of his bed, sucking down each breath with a hiss of pain, his throat torn and sore. His jawbone throbbed, teeth oversensitive as though he had eaten something cold and he flinched, feeling for a moment as though the bit Chilton had used was still placed in his mouth.

This was his fifth *'treatment'* this week and with each session he found it was harder to remember details, his memories of the hour following each session completely gone.

He was set to endure another week of this.

That was Chilton's promise to him, but as the man gradually increased the doses, Hannibal harboured earnest concern over what he would lose as a result. He knew the consequences but had *perhaps* overestimated his own capability to retain everything throughout the treatment. Knowing Chilton, the director wouldn't give up until something more noticeable gave way within Hannibal. He was more foolish than Hannibal had initially thought – willing to push until he broke him, research be damned.

Hannibal shuddered, repulsed by the idea of becoming Chilton's pet.

Gaps were already beginning to form in his long term memory, walls crumbling as rooms in his mind slowly began to blink out of existence and memories slipped beyond reach. While some he regained, he was disconnected from many others, slowly falling out of touch with the emotions each precious thought carried, almost as though he watched but a series of images - a movie - of a life that was not his own.

Damn that Chilton.

Given the current dose and exposure Hannibal theorised that in time he would regain everything, with but perhaps an increased delay to his immediate recollection. However the wear and tear that further electroconvulsive therapy could cause may well render the lost thoughts irrecoverable, if not cause further damage.

He wouldn't allow that.

The thought that he could lose something of Will, the memories of touches and sounds, those sweet gentle glances from the early days of their blossoming friendship, so trusting and open – no he wouldn't allow it. To lose that would shatter him, and yet there was something far more precious, the loss of which would cripple him beyond repair. Yes, the lost moments with Will could not be repeated, but he had the chance to make more, however the fragile memories of blonde hair and a tinkling voice could not be replaced.

No, he would not risk it. Never again would Chilton touch him with electricity.

It was time.

He had approximately two days before Chilton would have him called to the medical room again, if he was lucky. In the meantime he needed Landom.

Caspar Landom was a curious creature, but was for the most part simple in his fixation. He demonstrated a lust for violence, but yet had shown little initiative to take active part in it. The man had confessed to serving time as a youth in a place such as this where he was diagnosed with a range of mental afflictions. But the boy's above average intelligence had enabled him the means of crafting his own shield of normality.

The exact details of the boy's past had not been given in the small conversations they had flirted with, but given what he had seen, the story was easy to surmise. The nature of Caspar's obsession with him suggested an adoration for a father who, rather than absent and unfulfilling, had a neglectful relationship with his mother. Where his dependency on his father rose his disdain for his mother grew. Hannibal sensed a tale of infidelity concerning his mother, one that ruined his father and turned Caspar from women, given his derogatory views on them. The resolution to this childhood trauma most certainly resulted in violence, and Hannibal suspected Caspar had been the instigator, wielding his father's desolate agony for him to strike his mother down.

But not to a gory end.

Landom would never have been able to hide that from Chilton, besides, Caspar was no killer, though he lusted to witness a man take it into his own hands. Much like his father never could – it had been that which had brought him to Hannibal. He had not stood out at first, seemingly uninteresting, watching him with pointed eyes that Hannibal had simply taken as watchfulness. Then came Hannibal's exchange with a particularly foulmouthed guard. Despite Chilton's warning the guards had begun to neglect their caution of him after a month of his incarceration, growing lax in their attentiveness and tongues. Hannibal hadn't been pleasant in the early months of his imprisonment, but he had been far from his most malevolent self – after all, eased hearts offered up weaknesses and secrets in abundance.

He had allowed the filth and crude thoughts over he and Will's relationship to be voiced, letting them grow, but it was as much as a punishment to Will as it was to bide his time and learn. Granted they had always been wary of being too brash in front of him, though they took no such liberties with Will.

Hannibal watched in silence as his beloved suffered and knew all at once that he was a cruel man.

There was an exception to those who ventured to speak so crassly in front of him. Foolish dim-witted child. Three guards had been placed on him during shower time that day and Caspar had been among them. A more weathered veteran should have been with the group, but Hannibal had - up until that point - behaved without incident, lulling the facility into a false sense of security. They should never have forgotten what he was capable of, nor how patient he could be. The young man who wound up with no tongue had been a repeat offender of vulgar innuendoes and notions of putting Will to use.

Hannibal would have liked to say he had acted on the pure adrenalized amusement to remind them all of exactly who they were dealing with, but he had an ulterior motive, stirred by the voice within that rose to defend Will – despite everything that had happened.

Showering through the young guard's vulgarity, Hannibal had reached a decision as he listened to the man express an interest in slipping Will one. The man only made it worse for himself when he declared obscenely that, if Will had been so desperate for 'it' to have fucked a serial killer, one could not be sure he hadn't taken such pleasures with his dogs.

Needless to say, Hannibal had heard quite enough.

When it came time for him to change back into his dark blue jumpsuit he took the opportunity to grab the guard by the face. Like a kiss he descended on him, the man gasping and offering his tongue unconsciously and Hannibal had seized it between his teeth to bite through the tough muscle. The man had fallen away, screaming sending blood dripping down Hannibal's front even as the twitching flesh slid warmly down his throat. All at once the room sprang into action and he was pried from the boy and forced to the ground by Caspar.

With the fear of patients using exercise equipment to injure themselves and others, such facilities were off limits. As such, Hannibal's once 'well-oiled machine' had diminished due to inactivity and he had lost much of his bulk, slimming down to the lithe man of his youth. The option to struggle was there, but Caspar's six foot one frame had easy time of pinning him down as the other guard shrieked for help. He had grunted as Caspar stretched his arms behind his back, cuffing him quickly, yet instead of withdrawing, the man had continued to press down onto him, weight resting uncomfortably over his thighs.

The reason for his intimate closeness made itself apparent as a distinct erection had rubbed against the flesh of his arse. Hannibal had initially written it off as a power erection, but when he looked to Landom, he found the man was miles away from their current situation. His eyes were wide with excitement looking down upon Hannibal with awe and naked desire - no longer aware that he was in fact a guard holding down a murderous prisoner. Shamelessly he had begun to rock his body, clothed cock rutting up between Hannibal's bare cheeks.

Hannibal had been surprised to say the least, but he was nothing if not an opportunist.

He saw before him a chance to cultivate a plan, an new game to play to lure in this prospective ally and so he had softened his body, bending until he appeared receptive in a form of dumbfounded lust. As the assault continued he allowed his mouth to slip open with a gasp, eyes wide in feigned desire and a resentful kind of shock to sell his willing body to the man moving above him. As Caspar ran a hand through his hair and down his spine, a

breathless ‘daddy’ had slipped from his lips in wonderment before more guards rushed in to secure the situation.

It was almost too easy to play the kind of overwhelmed vulnerability that appealed to those types.

Establishing a mode of communication had been easy from there, the man inexplicitly drawn to him, taking all assigned details to him. It was a feat achieved with little hassle due to Caspar’s position within Chilton’s trusted circle – somehow the boy had managed to pass Chilton’s screening process with flying colours.

After little persuasion, various plans were devised and commenced, only to be ignored much to Landom’s obvious chagrin. Each plan had been designed to ensure only his freedom (with Caspar by his side until he could be disposed of) but whenever an opportunity to enact them arose; Hannibal would feign an excuse - offering a barely plausible reason to linger.

It seemed he was incapable of leaving without Will.

Even with the renewal of their conversations, the wounds between them were many, some reduced to raw scars while others continued to fester. He wanted Will to join him, but given the chance - would he even come with him? Hannibal had reasonable doubt, after all his beloved had betrayed him before when offered this very chance.

Fool me twice…

Yet Will had now seen him every time he was brought from Chilton’s therapy chamber. Knowing the danger Hannibal faced should he ignore the chance to escape, would Will join him?

Rinsing his mouth out he pulled himself from the floor, clambering onto his bed frame to curl down in a foetal position, trying to hold his stomach at bay. He shook as though electricity still coursed through him and turned to the wall, scrunching his face up in pain, unwilling to give Chilton’s camera the show.

In time he would kill Frederick Chilton and relish the screams he would extract from him, compensating every shock of electricity with a pound of flesh. But first he needed to escape.

***

A plan was quickly put into place, pulled together by the remnants of previous conceptions and with Caspar on board there was little for Hannibal to do but wait for nightfall. With the news that he would be breaking out his newly found father figure, Landom became notably lighter, carrying himself about with a carefree mood. Hannibal had chosen to

keep silent over his decision to bring Will with him lest Landom act out against Will in the meantime.

After all Hannibal knew who had *really* been behind the attack on Will.

Habowski was a brute, but an idiot. Landom on the other hand possessed a good hand at manipulation and held a concerning amount of contempt for Will.

Whilst this reason held true to logic, a part of him suspected he kept his silence due to the reservations he still held over freeing his beloved. There was no denying that Hannibal loved him and that in their time here some kind of forgiveness had passed between them, but they were not at ease. For want of a better phrase – Hannibal simply couldn't trust Will. He could no longer trust in what Will wanted, in what he would deny even himself to satisfy the moral part of him. Hannibal had tried in many ways to push him, dosing him with punishments of silence, of care, of notable flirtation with another all to try and illicit a reaction.

But in the end there had been nothing.

So, in the event that Will agreed to come with him, could Hannibal trust his motives for why?

They would be no lovely couple, no harmonious sweethearts strolling down the streets in Florence, languid in their shared smiles and tinkling laughter. That was the future he had envisioned before the night he tore that life apart. Yet still he was an epicurean man. With his freedom he would fashion a life with the leisure he was accustomed to - but would it be one Will could be satisfied with? As far as Will had come, he remained tortured by his new found self and was more than willing to continuing this form of self-flagellation.

But knowing what would happen if Hannibal stayed under Chilton's care, would Will's morality hold out past that? He would have to choose one final time – Hannibal or justice?

Yet Will had forsaken him every time before this. That inability to predict Will both delighted Hannibal and caused him great torment because he knew, should Will say no he would not be satisfied with leaving his beloved behind.

No…should Will say no, Hannibal would finally kill him. Not for anger, or betray, but for love - there was no other way.

And then he really would be alone in the world.

***

Night had fallen and as sleep came to many of the inmates the graveyard guards settled in for their shift. Hannibal lay on his back, hands clasped over his stomach, eyes closed as he measured each breath - an imitation of sleep as he waited. He had spent all day pondering

over possible mistakes and complications that could occur tonight, but each seemed manageable. Given comfort in this, his mind wandered more unpleasantly towards what may be his final moments with Will.

Should he have to kill Will, he would not do it with the same intentions he harboured when he hunted him down in their last encounter. He was not the empty mad dog he had been, hiding behind thoughts of unifying them together so he would not have to accept that the damage unravelling him was as much his fault as it was Will. He had reconciled with himself, and with Will to some extent. In their time here they had become bonded in a different way. Where once Hannibal held the trigger to dashing Will's sanity into shambles, they had each become the foundation on which their very identity rested, their minds linked together to meld in a way that extended beyond the bond of blood and murder they already shared.

He was not his carbon copy, far from it and yet it was as though he was a part of him - hence to eliminate him was to surely destroy that part of himself. But if Will would not come with him, how could he leave that part of himself here to rot?

A high pitched whine buzzed in his ear before all the lights went out, plunging the block into darkness. Will could be heard staggering to his feet even as Hannibal lifted himself from the bed, looking about his room to bid his paintings one final goodbye.

"Hannibal?" a wary voice called from next door and there was a shuddering engine sound as the generator kicked in, flooding the hall with a dim red glow.

"I need to you to keep quiet Will, only for just a short while. Everything will become clear soon."

Will huffed, the air between them loaded with questions begging to be asked. Will knew what this was, though he may currently be reasoning away such a possibility despite how he had already locked down on the suspicion. It always marvelled Hannibal how rarely humans could simply accept their gut instincts, always trying to rationalise away daunting and powerless possibilities instead of preparing for them. Ignoring this gift of their animal ancestors, Will was no exception, yet Hannibal found the trait rather endearing in his beloved. Perhaps it was that quality that had veiled the truth of Hannibal from Will for so long and provided Hannibal with those precious first months of sweet unacknowledged reprieve.

But it was better to be known by him, regardless of the pain. To be seen by his beloved was worth it all.

Three separate torch lights could be seen beaming passed his cell from the end of the hall and he crouched down, pressing himself into the corner of the wall. Orders were exchanged and three became one as the group broke apart to search the block, keys jiggling as the computerised lock was manual overridden. Heavy footsteps signalled the guard's approach and Hannibal drew a deep breath, preparing for the possibilities that it would not be Caspar who faced him.

The blinding flash of the torch caused him to flinch, but at the stammering apology he knew that Caspar had succeeded.

He was going to be free.

There should have been some satisfaction in that, but instead he was consumed by the decision he now faced. A pain stabbed at his gut and he had to wonder whether secretly, some part of him had wanted the plan to fail, despite what awaited him at Chilton's hands, just to have more time with Will. He marvelled for a moment - even still there were parts of himself he had yet to completely comprehend, but they filled him with such a lovely feeling of being alive.

Landom rattled off details of the plan as he dealt with the locks on Hannibal's door, but Hannibal had no care to know how many guards were about – he would just kill them should they get in his way. For now, he wanted to see Will as soon as possible and yet was terrified to. The door swung open and he stumbled from his plastic little cage, losing balance as his body twisted automatically to his right in search of barred blue eyes. Instead he was caught and pulled into Caspar's arms, the man shuddering as he buried his forehead into Hannibal's hair, lips pressed to his neck. In the red light Will watched them stone-faced, yet there was a cutting look of violence in his eyes that had Hannibal begin to stiffen in his pants.

"Caspar, open Will's cell." Hannibal breathed, voice slightly choked as he stood frozen under Will's gaze as hands began to roam his body.

He *loved* that look.

"Why?" The arms around him tightened and Will's eyes flashed.

It was always clear to him what Caspar wanted from him, and with the absence of affection for so long, Hannibal had thought of using the man to satiate his thirst, if only to garner the right attention from Will. Yet in this moment, those possessive touches made his skin crawl because it was not enough to have contact when he craved a calloused grip.

That had never been a problem before. When longing for company Hannibal had always been willing to take whatever partner to satisfy his needs, he was protean like that. That Caspar's touch was not enough was a testimony to quite how dependent Hannibal was on Will – without him, nothing would ever enough.

"Sentiment." He said offhandedly.

Landom stopped with a frown. "But I thought you said we were leaving him."

"That's up to him." Hannibal smiled and took the chance to move out of his loose grip towards the cell door, shivering as Will's top lip curled back.

"But—"

"Just open it – for me." Hannibal broke contact with Will to briefly give the man his full attention and placate him. It had its desired effect and then some for when he looked back

to Will he saw a cruel coldness seize the man as he watched them from darkness. Landom's blatant behaviour could very well encourage Will into joining them – and seeing the destructive intent to kill in his eyes now, Hannibal knew what he needed to push Will off the edge.

Will's insecurity.

He may not have to lose Will after all – instead, he may even be gifted with the chance to see Will make art once more.

As Landom got the door open, Hannibal took in that fiery blue gaze and felt the blood rushing through his head, filling him with heat even as it coursed lower. In this moment Will appeared a beast, starved and bloodthirsty and Hannibal knew he would pay for playing him, but it would be worth it – it almost always was.

He sighed. "If I saw you every day forever, I would remember this time."

With every heartbeat the future he had tried to picture without Will faded from existence because why, when Hannibal had given him so much reason to believe he would be another's, would Will want to let him leave without him. The door swung open but Will remained where he was, the whites of his teeth peeking below his lip in warning.

It was Hannibal who would have to coax the Lion from the den.

Walking passed Landom he allowed the man another indulgence, another touch, mouth hot at his nape to seal Will's fate before he entered the cell. With this he would have Will. He would have his beloved…surely.

He approached with quiet, even steps until he was but a hair's breadth from Will. Up close he could see the anger in that beautiful blue glare and once more felt heat flood his groin. God how long had it been? He wanted him, any way Will would let him. Hard, sweet - he'd fuck Will as gently as the man wanted, he'd let Will tie him down and ruin him as long as he wanted - he didn't care, he just needed him.

Will's mask of rage fractured slightly as Hannibal reached out a hand to stroke his cheek. "I should leave you behind." He whispered in Will's ear, watching his skin rise as his breath cascaded across his neck.

These lies were their foreplay now.

Hannibal gazed at him, hand flexing in the desire to reach out and simply take what he wanted, but the space between them was charged with a dangerous energy and the spark of uncertainty. Will's eyes were guarded as they stared over his shoulder at the man currently stewing in his own possessiveness. Hannibal had hurt Caspar by forcing him to watch this exchange, but this had never been for him. He had been intentionally sloppy with his private conversation with the man, talking loud enough for Will to hear and fondly enough of him when he was absent to stir Caspar into considering him an enemy.

But it was Landom Hannibal wanted Will to consider as an enemy, a final itching challenge to push him to look pass his convictions and finally betray them, not Hannibal.

"You should." Will's gaze flickered back to look to him, "I still believe we belong here – *together."* His jaw clenched as his gaze dropped away just enough to avoid the direct persuasion of Hannibal's eyes.

"For the greater good?" Hannibal gestured to the dark space around them and leaned closer. "I'll show you why we deserve to be free." Will's guarded gaze soften, eyes flickering down to his lips. There was physical hunger in his expression, but Hannibal could not fathom just what was going through his mind. Will had manipulated the connection between them, loved him, betrayed him and broken him. Despite that, Will had to know Hannibal would not be able to leave him here. And yet even with the gate of his cell wide open, Hannibal beckoning for him, Will could still choose to stay here and refuse him.

Will's hand made a fist as his brows drew together and he shook his head before he looked up to Hannibal, wearing a terrifyingly angry look, voice shaking. "We are not forgiven Hannibal. We are not ok and this is not right. We do not have the right to deserve when we have stolen so much that was we never ours to touch let alone take."

Those cruel words had a surprising effect on Hannibal and for a moment he recoiled, feeling as though he had been punched.

"But," Will grasped his wrist pulling him back to him, eyes casting a murderous look behind him where Caspar had moved forward. "This bond is the kind of thing that is hard to shake off once it is already under the skin. I can't rationalise it, but it has always been a source of uncontrolled and involuntary pleasure for me. I don't believe that will ever change."

"Then you will come with me?" Hannibal questioned, voice calm and level despite the warmth building in his gut.

Will appeared reluctant, that was plain to see, but Hannibal felt the unease in his system fade away as Will continued to throw glances to the third member of their company. "I won't see you under Chilton's hand, or this fucks for that matter." Will's lip lifted in a snarl as he spoke.

Standing there, looking gritty and unkempt, blue eyes holding daggers for the both of them, Will had never seemed more beautiful to him. Looking to the hand still wrapped around his wrist, Hannibal yanked the arm back sending Will stumbling forward. Grasping him by the jaw, he ignored Will's disgruntled protest and covered his mouth with his own, swallowing each sound down. He wanted to devour him, to push him down and consume him, each bloody mouthful at a time. He would do it, if only he could be sure holding Will within him would sate his loneliness forever. If he could forever feel him he would consume him, but he could never consider Will a simply meat – he was a remedy, to Hannibal's mind and soul.

He was all that matter here and now, maybe forever.

Will drew his lips together, denying him the passion he sought, yet held him close by the elbows. He was a man torn apart by his consciousness and desire, the facet of his emotional state held three oceans apart from each other. Threading his fingers through Will's curls, he yanked back on them, the grunt Will gave loosening his lips enough for Hannibal to swipe his tongue across those dangerous teeth and taste the man he'd missed so much. The dirt, the stale bitterness and regret and underneath it all…the longing. For a moment Will seemed to lose himself, neck craning back to lean up into the kiss and an unconscious shiver travelled through Hannibal.

To his surprise those teeth proved effective, clenching down on his bottom lip and Will's incisors tore through the soft skin, flooding the kiss with blood. Pained, Hannibal was dazed, transported for a moment to their first kiss, recalling the lush taste of blood in a warmly lit office in a time that seemed like years ago.

"But we are not okay. I will never be ok with this." Brushing him off, Will levelled him with a glare.

Hannibal sucked his lip before running his fingertips over the swelling flesh. "We'll have to work on that."

He would change Will's mind, whether it took months or years, he would do it and not like he had before. Will would witness every step, he would not shy away from it and hide – Hannibal would show him everything. The change would be Will's own to make - he would be conscious and aware of it all.

Hannibal would have him accept everything.

This was his design.

***

The plan was executed without obstruction.

Under the fall of night and the power out, Landom snuck them through the facility and into a common van. There was some tension to deal with during the escape, Caspar essentially refusing to leave Hannibal's side and by extension preventing Will from getting within five feet of him. Will seemed to be mostly unbothered by the man's acts, albeit disgusted by the petulance he was displaying. However when he believed that all attention was from him, Hannibal saw the look of murder that turned his blue eyes icy.

Evidently - based on his frequent 'rising interests' this night - Hannibal found that expression incredibly arousing.

As they exited the facility grounds, the cogs of his mind turned, following thought after thought, conceiving all the possible outcomes of tonight and within the many choices,

Hannibal saw the ideal - a path where Will took arms against their little problem and blessed him with the vision of in blood.

He shivered.

To achieve it, he would have to push this game further than Will would like and allow a few trespasses upon himself he normally would never even consider, but perhaps it was time for a fresh set of rules. There were no longer any barriers to up hold, no mask to maintain any more. A new Hannibal would be fashioned from the ashes of this life, the cordial psychologist gone. The profession had provided an engaging time to expand on his ability to manipulate, but it was not a science, often positivity puerile, most psychological departments filled with ham radio enthusiasts and personality deficient morons.

No it was time to move on from that life, perhaps to one that required far less reservation. In Florence he could shrug off the professional severity. He looked forward to indulging more openly in his many pursuits, money was hidden all across the world in various banks, a Tuscan villa already waiting for him across the water. Just a little longer and he could have it all… and Will too.

“I booked a room at motel just on the outskirts of Balitmore.” Caspar announced as they left Baltimore State Hospital in the darkness behind them. Eyes on the road, Hannibal sat in the passenger seat with Will rattling about in the back.

Hannibal blinked, sincerely hoping he not overestimated how smart Landom was.

He maintained a neutral expression as Will scoffed incredulously. “Are you an idiot? This van will have a registered tracker as a state vehicle.”

Caspar’s knuckles grew white as he gripped the wheel tightly. “Do we have to bring him along?”

Hannibal chuckled, reaching out to graze his fingers briefly across the nape of Caspar’s neck, watching from the corner of his eye as Will’s gaze narrowed. “Go on, you weren’t finished were you?”

Landom puffed out his chest. “Three motels in total have been booked. We’re heading to the one under Hector Graham, there we will change cars and head back into Baltimore to a motel under Frederick Chilton. Beyond the first motel is a second inn booked under Annabel Graham on the way to Washington where two tickets to London are booked under your names.” He patted his chest, “I have the actual tickets for our flight here in Baltimore here, but we’re gonna have to lie low for a bit till they pick up the trail first.”

Hannibal smiled – it wasn’t a bad plan but he underestimated just how efficient Jack Crawford would be as soon as he was notified. Still there were enough red herrings to buy them some time, but it was imperative that they change cars and get to the airport as soon as possible.

“I did good didn’t I?” Caspar looked at him with wide eyes, waiting for approval.

Hannibal laid a hand on the man's thigh. "Very well indeed – I'm proud of my boy, you're taking such good care of me."

Caspar beamed and Hannibal's mask almost slipped when he saw the young man visibly stiffen in his pants. And yet he kept his hand close, encouraged by the grind of teeth from behind them, Will appearing as though he would like to lunge forward and do inventive things with Landom's insides.

"I brought some clothes for you in the back. I wasn't sure what you wanted so I got a few different things." Caspar said after a while, before his lip curled. "There may be something to fit your mutt – but a lot of it is far too fine for him."

Will rolled his eyes and began rummaging through the back, Hannibal turning from the endless night road to watch him. As he pulled up bits of fabric and shook them out, Hannibal quirked a brow, surprised at the sheer quality and design of the clothes. Landom had gone out of his way to try and impress him, the clothes matching the finery of his suits, slim cut and certainly expensive. Composed mostly of dress trousers, silk shirts and waist coats, Will appeared at a loss for what to choose.

Once more facing the road, Hannibal kept an eye on the rear-view mirror to indulge in the slips of bare skin as Will changed, breath stuttering at a glimpse of his scarred belly. In the end he had to resist the urge to chuckle at his sour-faced lover sitting in a dashing outfit, broad shoulders and tapered waist accentuated sharply by a tight waist coat. Their journey passed with small talk between he and Caspar, but Will held his tongue, calculating the situation as he no doubt questioned his decision to join them, ever the turbulent creature Hannibal adored.

Pulling off road and into the woods, Caspar turned the engine off. "The second car is just around the bend, in front of the motel." He shot Will a derisive look. "We have to change out of these clothes – you can go get it, it's a silver ford focus sedan."

There was a moment of silence as the two stared each other down before Will looked to Hannibal. A micro twitch had the corner of his mouth lifting as he tilted his head at him, prepared to allow Will to decide on his own. Hannibal knew what would happen as soon as Will was out of the way, the thing was, did Will care? Would he intervene or would his insecurities hold his instincts at bay. Whether it was in the past or the future, Hannibal would never be a nice person, he would never not play his games or test Will. Honestly, how could he resist challenging this intrinsically fascinating person who had somehow stolen the heart he never knew still existed?

Will gritted his teeth and growled under his breath. "Fine."

"Just press the button," Caspar threw the keys to him. "It shouldn't be too hard, even for you." He sneered and Hannibal's fingers flexed unconsciously before he reminded himself that there would be a positively exquisite end to the man if only he bided his time.

Ignoring the remark, Will slipped from the van, slamming the doors as he disappeared into the night. As soon as he was from sight, Caspar reached over to him, cupping his head to

pull him in for a kiss. Pushing the hand away, Hannibal supressed a shiver and instead threw him a beguiling smile. “Don’t presume – we’ve no time for such things.”

Leaving the van, Hannibal opened up the back doors to shift through the clothes, pleased with the choices on offer. Picking a suit that was soft to the touch but far from the extravagance of his usual attire, he felt hands wrap about his waist. Pulled back into Caspar’s body, he sighed and conceded, allowing him to fiddle with the buttons of his jumpsuit.

“You promised Daddy.” Caspar’s voice was much like an infant’s in these moments, higher, petulant and desperate.

“Yes but now is not really the time for me to fulfil my promise.” He had to stall, just long enough till Will returned.

“But now your mutt is here, he’s ruining everything.” The thin material of the prison wear did nothing to disguise the erection now pressing insistently at his behind.

“I’ll take care of it my boy, just as you have taken such good care of me.” What would Will do when he saw them like this? Would he turn from it? Would he pull Caspar from him and protect them? Would Hannibal finally see what he had longed for since Will left Randall Tier’s broken body on his dining table?

“But I only booked two tickets Daddy – we’ll have to wait till I can get another one but it could take a while. I don’t know what to do.”

“Don’t worry my boy, it won’t be a problem. Trust me.”

“I wanna touch you daddy.” Caspar grazed his teeth over the back of Hannibal’s neck. “I know you want me to touch you, look at you.”

His hand wound down to palm Hannibal’s stiffening cock. His body jerked forward on its own accord but his arousal was not from any physical touch, but rather the fantasy playing across his mind. What would Will look like? Would he be vengeful in a possessive anger or cold and calculated?

He shivered; either way he would be magnificent.

Caspar’s palms were drenched in a cold sweat as he pulled the jumpsuit off his shoulders and down to his waist, slick hand wrapping around his cock. Hannibal moaned, the sensation undeniably good considering he had been deprived of intimate contact for so long. In the past, Hannibal had rarely gone more than a month without sexual activity so it was easy to enjoy the simple physical sensation. It would have been far improved if Caspar wasn’t making those whiny groans in his ear.

He grunted in surprise when Caspar forced him down, knees bashing against the rear bumper as hands tried to pull the jumpsuit further down. “I can’t wait daddy, I need to see you.”

Hannibal frowned, allowing Caspar to caress the flesh of his hips. This was too fast - Will couldn't have possibly retrieved the car in this time. It looked as though Hannibal was going to have to kill Landom himself.

"Is he better than me daddy? Is that why you brought him? I can take better care of you – I promise." A wave of revulsion surged through him as Caspar could be heard spitting onto his fingers.

The prideful man he was would never usually stand for such behaviour, but it seemed such a worthy opportunity. Yet it was one that relied on Will and the depth of his love for Hannibal - both things seemingly out of Hannibal's control. The nature of Will's love for him was always a point of concern as it was a fickle thing that existed in rejection of the man Will wanted to be. In acceptance of one, Will rejected the other and Hannibal was left to ponder this fascinating unpredictability that plagued him with the age old agony.

Did Will love him enough?

Hannibal's love was a passion so strong it was almost pathological. An aeipathy that caused him to do such unreasonable things and act in ways so contradictory to his methodology. In the end perhaps Will really would be the death of him, for Hannibal would do anything for him, bending far beyond his breaking point. It seemed he was even willing to go against his own nature for him, constricted by a love that withstood time, doubt and change.

Somehow still he had lost the game as well.

Such a shame to lose this opportunity to see Will kill once more, but there was no way he could stand the young man's touch any longer.

He thought it may be possible, his physical longing powerful enough to overcome his desire solely for Will, but it seemed the spell of Will's touch had barred him from finding satisfaction from any other. He tensed as cold slick fingers trailed down in between his cheeks, looking in front of him for a weapon to hopefully bludgeon the man to death.

The incessant prodding stopped after a loud resounding crack and Hannibal flipped over, grazing his elbows on the unforgiving floor. With the moon light bathing him in a cold glow, Will was more picturesque than Hannibal had imagined, his hand seized about Caspar's throat, the man's head hanging at an odd angle.

If his erection had not died under Caspar's ministrations, Hannibal honestly believed the biblical image Will made could have brought him to orgasm. As it were he was once again hard staring up at those luminescent eyes that froze him still. What he felt in that moment was something akin to fear - instinctively perhaps it was - for here and now Will was the predator, savouring his kill as he held his victim's body within his grasp. And yet it was Hannibal who felt the prey, as though Caspar had been nothing but an obstruction.

His heart was racing out of control and his eyes went wide in surprise as he struggled to bring its pace down. Will released a sigh, eyes closing as he craned his head back and allowed Landom's body to fall heavily to the ground. Hannibal thought he would feel

darkness in Will, that in murder the man's blackness would pour out, but instead he radiated light, its brilliance stealing Hannibal's breath.

This was how Will should always look, and yet Hannibal would kill any who would gaze upon this face. No one could know. This was his treasure, this purity Will exuded when he killed, it was instinctive, it was savoured and relished but it lack the tendril of malevolence Hannibal executed within his kills. Hannibal's cruelty was born not only out of his turmoil, but also his pre-existing desire for violence, his kills a sacrilege to god and nature's order. Yet Will's was a monument, and offering to that order, as though he was simply establishing his place as a predator within it.

Hannibal had never felt so reverential.

"Sorry to interrupt." Will's gaze had returned to him, but Hannibal was still at a loss for words. He had finally done it, Hannibal may have lost the game, but Will was now his, well and truly. Even unrefined, he was a killer of true beauty and divinity. Hannibal's breath was coming quick now as he pictured the men and women who would pass under their hands, the thrill they would experience - together.

He would never be alone again.

Will stood there staring down at him, triumphant expression morphing into one of surprise as Hannibal surged up and kissed him. He pressed to him, lining his body up against Will so he could feel every *adoring* part of him. Will's lip curled and a hand came around to take hold of Hannibal's hair forcefully.

"I said 'sorry to interrupt'." Will bit deeply into his lip, "Don't you have anything to say, no denial, no apology?"

Hannibal smirked in response and pushed forward, ignoring the angry teeth pulling his kisses apart. He brought his hand to Will's waist coat, making swift work of the buttons there and Will snarled, batting his hands away.

Twisting his arm, Hannibal grunted in pain as Will turned him around, his feet touching the ground again as he stared into the empty space of the van. There was a sharp pain at his shoulder as Will bit savagely at the muscle there.

"You infuriate me. Will you ever stop playing these games with me?" Will sounded at the end of his tether, and yet Hannibal itched to push that extra inch.

In the end, despite everything – Will had still returned to him - more frayed and angry, but evermore dependent and Hannibal loved it. He had done unspeakable things to this man, torn him down, stripped away everything, every fort and comfort until all that remained was the raw core. He had not changed what lay within, only affected the empath with splinters of his soul, watching them cut through to burrow deep within and reveal to Will the limitless world at their grasp.

And finally his beloved had taken hold of it.

Hannibal moaned, hands trembling where they were braced against the door frame, arching his body into Will's behind him. A hand came around to take his cock in a hard grip and Hannibal cried out. Will was angry - furious actually, even as he pressed up into him with obvious arousal. Tempted to reach for him, Hannibal held his hands at bay on the cold metal and allowed Will to handle him roughly, feeling pleasure coiling up his spine. Will wanted to punish him, to push him but it was Hannibal who held the torturous hand, Will did not have the true fortitude to cause him real pain.

With each gnash of teeth and hard tug of a callous palm, Hannibal's toes curled, his cock beginning to leak profusely in Will's grasp. As much as it hurt, it felt so good, the pressure, the heat of him burning into his back as he breathed down his neck. That anger and frustration was addicting and in truth the most arousing thing Hannibal had experienced, the way his fingertips dug into his hips just enough to bruise him ever so softly as he ground into him.

"Fuck, you actually like this." Will groaned at his ear, taking the lobe into his mouth as he fiddled with the front of his pants.

Hannibal released a long sigh when Will's bare cock bumped against him and he swivelled his hips back, trying to have it slip between his cheeks so he could feel it where he wanted it. Will hissed as the tip of his cock dragged over the puckered muscle and jerked forward. Hannibal bite down on his lip as the blunt head ground insistently at his arsehole, fearing he would come then and there.

"No," Will panted into his neck. "No you don't get this," He gritted his teeth even as his hips continued to thrust him forward, precum trickling over his hole.

Even as the hand over his cock twisted harshly Hannibal breathed his name with a groan and turned his face, seeking out his lover's lips. Their eyes met and Will's face was a picture of anguish, composed of anger and pleasure. He wanted control, he wanted to exert his torment upon Hannibal, yet could not resist their lust. Hannibal wanted to devour Will's pain, to taste it in his mouth and know it was all for him, to savour the evidence of how deeply he had poisoned this man.

Ah, he truly was a cruel creature.

Hannibal licked his lips, aware of how Will's eyes followed the motion precisely. His beloved saw the cruelty there and felt it keenly, indecision written upon his face as he struggled to choose whether to push Hannibal away and reject the game he played, or simply surrender to him.

As he looked to the corpse at their feet, Hannibal saw the realisation that they were free, their last obstacle dead on the ground, cross Will's face before a calm seemed to settle over him. Releasing his cock, Hannibal whined at the loss but was placated as Will gripped his face and gave in to a kiss. Will wanted Hannibal's submission to restore his claim - and he could have it, because in the end they both knew this was all part of Hannibal's design.

The kiss was messy and slick, lips fattened and bruised from teeth and rough treatment. Spit trickled down Hannibal's jaw as Will tangled their tongues together, sweet moans

slipping unconsciously from his beloved's mouth. Hannibal had missed those sounds, the way they simmered with abandon and enjoyment - that voice could never disguise how deeply Will felt pleasure.

Bracing himself with just one arm, Hannibal took hold of his cock, pulling down on it, playing with the tip just the way he liked before suddenly Will's sweet sounds turned savage.

"Not without me you don't." He growled, turning away to spit in his hand, slicking his cock up. "Put your legs together." He murmured against Hannibal's is skin, warm breath sending a wave of shivers across his body.

Bending slightly, Hannibal pressed his thighs together, knowing exactly what Will wanted even before he pushed his cock through the soft gap made there. Hannibal was initially disappointed that this was all he would get until the head of Will's cock dragged underneath his own, gasping as it trailed down the tense vein, maintaining a delicious pressure against his balls.

With a roll of Will's hips Hannibal threw his head back, releasing an unrestrained moan, his hand faltering around his cock. Each thrust had Hannibal closer to the edge and wishing that Will was within him, pounding at his prostate. He just needed something more than this teasing. If only he could lay Will down and feel the heat of his body as Hannibal entered him slowly, worshipping him. But Will would not allow such a thing, holding him at bay to maintain distance – an effective punishment for a epicurean man like Hannibal.

Lost to the whirlwind of sensations rippling through them, Will wrapped his arms around Hannibal, squeezing the air from his chest as he snapped his hips forward. Hannibal gasped, knuckles going white where he clung to the van as Will slipped too far back and dragged his slick head across his hole. Shuddering behind him, Will buried his face into Hannibal's nape and thrust forward, a curse falling from his lips as his cock pushed in just a fraction, just enough for Hannibal to feel the dry pain ignite his pleasure and send him tumbling towards orgasm.

Reaching around to grasp him, Will thrust himself back underneath his cock and Hannibal could not stay silent as the added pressure drove a static current up through his body as he shot his release over Will's hand. His body tensed and shook like a bowed string as Will continued to grind into him before he came too with a hoarse groan, voice cracking under the duress of this silent hunger that had gone unfulfilled for too long.

He panted at his shoulder, fingers flexing teasingly around Hannibal's now oversensitive cock. "You didn't deserve that." Will softened his grip, stroking him gently as he continued to dribble over his hand. "Did you want it so much that it didn't matter who?"

Head light with release, Hannibal leered, unrestrained in his victory. "I have my desires." He was triumphant. But a few hours ago, the possibility of all this happening seemed so slim, and yet here he stood, his freedom grasped firmly in one hand with Will, murderous and dependent in the other.

He almost feared he'd wake up.

He sensed Will's frown before he turned to see his lover, breathing heavily now and looking somewhat sullen with his response. He sighed and reached out to grasp Will by the jaw. "In the end, it was always going to be you." He swiped his tongue across Will's lip.

Will' eyes focused, the fog of adrenaline and endorphins lifting the veil away as he looked about, to Hannibal's ruined clothes, to the body on the ground and the silent night around them. Complete awareness return to him, but it did not bring with it regret or fear, only an atmosphere of discontent and aggravation resting on those heavy brows.

How Will did *hate* to be manipulated.

Pushing his long locks from his face Will sighed before straightening and Hannibal saw the face of a new man there, a dangerous man. A man that was all his. "What do we do now?"

Leaning forward once more Hannibal kissed him, biting at the plump flesh on offer, enjoying the soft sounds falling from his beloved. "Shall we leave the FBI a gift?"

Will leaned back from the kiss, raising a hand to pull at Hannibal's bruised bottom lip before he cocked his head.

"Only if we can get it done quickly." He indulged.

Hannibal grinned.

'We'.

*

"I feel within me now the cravings of wild beasts, the instincts of a love that is carnivorous, capable of tearing flesh to pieces. Is this love? Perhaps it is the opposite. Perhaps in my case it's the heart that is impotent." — Gustave Flaubert in a letter to his lover, Louise Colet

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Chapter End Notes

Next chapter - To Florence! and the reveal on what really happened to Abigail...duhduh

Take care of yourselves guys!
Elliearna

UPDATE: Unfortunately my year here is Japan has come to an end so I'm packing everything up and returning it all home to Australia while I travel for the next month or so. I had hoped to get the next chapter done, but I am far from finished and I really like the ending so I'm not going to rush it. I'm returning home on the 26th of September and will be madly writing from then on, just please bear with me cause it will be worth it! Sorry lovelies and see you all soon! In the meantime, give the Red Dragon some loving :) Take care!

A Letter to my Readers

Hi everyone,

I...wow it has really been a long time. I tried in so many ways to write this for you. First as I was leaving Japan and travelling before returning home. Then sleeping on my friends lounge as I tried to settle back home in Australia. All the while I kept trying to find the way to pull an epilogue together, combining the amazing context of Hannibal season 3 in Florence. I wanted Hannibal to impersonate Dr Roman Fell with Will as Dimmond, the man Dr Fell left his wife to run away with. They would have been turbulent as they always are, wealthy, comfortable murderers, taking life not to satisfy whims and punishment for the smallest of things, but in a way that expressed the sense of justice and vindication that Will breathed. And of course I had imagined terse dinners as Will identified that a paper's reporting and the chipper kitchen performance implied Hannibal had taken some liberties with their new found rules.

I wanted to give you guys happiness and sadness, I wanted to explain how Will had not wanted Abigail to survive the horrors of Hannibal and their fucked up tragic tale just to be sent to jail or worse, an institution. Instead, he had assisted in her suicide, another reason he was more than happy to follow Hannibal to the institution himself...penance for failing to protect her.

I had so many ideas, so many false starts and frustrations. I was losing the drive. I'm not a happy person, not really and this had been a place for me to explore the complicated nuances of basic instincts and needs, complicated intelligence and even just the fuckery that is the sand pit we're all turning around in.

I'm sorry to say that I lost touch with the epilogue but I really hoped it could be something I could have mustered through, I know I could have but...a lot of things happened to me in the time I've been gone. Stuff I didn't think I was going to make it through.

And after I did, all I felt was shame. Like I had betrayed my love and dedication for the story and all or yours. I hated that I could not find the spark to write in my memories of love for the characters in your support, even in the fandom and space despite the ups and downs I had experienced. I had lost touch and changed so much and I didn't know how to bring it back or apologise or explain.

Taking the courage today, I finally read your comments, all of them. They were all, absolutely amazing. Honestly I didn't know whether to smile or cry but you all warmed my heart with the love you had for this story. But I'm sorry to say I can't finish it now. It was the end of the journey honestly, the epilogue was just a hope and a dream. But the ideas above were what I wanted to express, now I hope you can imagine all the shenanigans they would get up to running amuck in Florence.

I know its taken so long, and I thank you all for being so patient, but Fruit of Hades is complete...just the way it is.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!